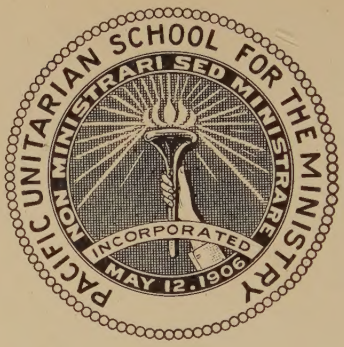
FIRST LESSONS
ON THE BIBLE



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E. H. H.

FIRST LESSONS

ON

THE BIBLE;

WRITTEN FOR HIS SUNDAY SCHOOL IN WORCESTER,

BY

EDWARD H. HALL.

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1. Palestine
2. Jews
3. Villages & Cities
4. Social life
5. Religion
6. Synagogues
7. Religious Customs

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8. Abram
9. Moses
10. Moses
11. Judges
12. Samuel
13. David
14. Solomon
15. Josiah
16. Jeremiah
17. Ezra
18. Maccabees
19. Old Testament

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20. Jesus
21. Childhood of Jesus
22. Beginning of Ministry
23. Manner of Preaching
24. Jesus & Common People
25. Companions of Jesus
26. Works of Healing
27. Jesus the Christ
28. The New Religion
30. Opposition of Jews
31. Jesus in Jerusalem
32. His Death
33. Gathering of the Church
34. Beginning of Christian Church
35. New Testament

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PREFACE.

THESE lessons are intended to be used at whatever age it is thought best for children to begin the study of the Bible. They have been tried in my own Sunday School by scholars from ten to seventeen years old.

The plan must be left to explain, and if possible justify itself. I will only say that the general idea was to take up simply the salient points of the Old Testament and New, without confusing the scholar's mind with such details as have no necessary bearing on the progress of events. The subject has been treated biographically; partly, because the young mind is more interested in persons than in abstract ideas, partly because the whole Bible really grew out of individual thought and life.

So far as the form is concerned, it will be understood that the Notes are intended to supply the scholars with the material needed for shaping their answers, though on no account to be committed to memory by them; while the References are for the use of teachers, that they may follow out the topics with such minuteness as seems to them best, or as the age of the scholars admits. The few references to general literature and art will suggest, it is hoped, a still wider use of these helps by intelligent teachers.

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The Schnorr illustrations referred to are a series of Bible wood-cuts published some years ago in Leipsic, of which the Old Testament subjects are treated with considerable spirit and accuracy of detail. The Illustrated Renan refers to an abbreviated edition of Renan's Vie de Jésus, published in Paris in 1870, with wood-cuts by Godefroy Durand. It is inexpensive, and the treatment of the subjects is so much superior to any thing else within my knowledge, that it seems to me the only successful attempt to represent pictorially the life of Jesus. I should consider the study of the New Testament as here proposed quite incomplete without these illustrations. It is possible that they may soon be published in separate form in portfolio.

It will be understood that the "Bible for Young People" and the "Bible for Learners" are the English and American editions of the same book. I have made my references to the "Bible for Young People," because the American reprint had not appeared when these lessons were written.

E. H. H.

WORCESTER, February, 1882.

FIRST LESSONS ON THE BIBLE.

LESSON I.

PALESTINE.

1. In what part of the world is Palestine?
2. How large is it compared with Massachusetts?
3. Are there mountains in it, and if so, how high are they?
4. What lakes are there?
5. Why is one called the Dead Sea?
6. What is the largest river?
7. Is Palestine further north or further south than this place?
8. What kind of climate has it, and what seasons?
9. What grows there?
10. Name two or three of its cities or villages.

Texts: Deut. viii. 7, 8; Num. xiii. 23; Jer. xlvi. 18; Matt. vi. 28, 29, 30.*

NOTES.

Palestine is about 140 miles long by 40 wide; Massachusetts (without Cape Cod) about 160 by 50. So they are of very nearly the same size, only one runs lengthwise north and south, the other east and west.

It is much more mountainous than Massachusetts, as the map shows. Some of the towns are situated higher than the top of Mt. Wachusett, and the hills just north of Palestine are much higher than Mt. Washington, and are always covered with snow.†

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* Each child may commit one or two of the texts to memory, if the teacher chooses.

† Lebanon and Hermon are 10,000 ft.; Tabor, 1,800; Carmel, 1,500; Wachusett, 2,008; Holyoke, 1,120; Jerusalem, 2,610.

In the north lies the Sea of Galilee or Tiberias, which is about four times as large as Lake Quinsigamond; towards the south is the Dead Sea, which is a little larger than Lake George. The water of the Dead Sea is very salt and bitter to the taste, and no fish or other animal can live in it. It used to be supposed, in old times, that birds which tried to fly over it fell into the water dead. It is more dense and buoyant than any water you have ever seen, so that if you were to bathe in it, you could not sink if you tried; and if you sailed on it your boat would be an inch or two higher out of water than on other lakes. The Dead Sea does not seem to have any outlet, so that all the water that the Jordan pours into it must evaporate instead of running off.

The Jordan is the only long river. It rises north of the Sea of Galilee, 1,700 feet above the sea, and when it reaches the Dead Sea it is 1,300 feet below the sea, so that it seems to be rushing most of the way down a very steep hill. Some travellers describe it as a "continuous waterfall." In some places it is very deep, in others, at some seasons of the year, you can walk across it.

The latitude of Palestine is about °31 to 33°, very nearly the same as the south part of Georgia. From October to March it is rainy, from April to September very hot. Crops are harvested in April and May. The hot summer sun withers the flowers and grass quickly, and leaves the country bare. Barley and wheat are the chief grains; and beside these are grapes in very large clusters, pomegranates, figs, cedar and olive trees, and bright-colored oleanders, anemones, tulips and poppies. The northern parts are much more fertile than the southern. Jerusalem, which stands on high land in the south, is the most important city. Bethlehem is a village of 4,000 people, five miles away. Nazareth is a still smaller village in a pretty valley among the hills, not far from the Sea of Galilee.

References.

Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine" (Ch. II.); Thomson's "Land and the Book;" Van Lennep's "Bible Lands."* Geikie's "Life of Christ" (Ch. II.); Smith's Bible Dictionary, or Dictionary of Gr. and Roman Geography (Art. Palestine); Kinglake's "Eothen;" Warburton's "Crescent and Cross;" "Our Work in Palestine;" Martineau's "Eastern Life."

Use also a raised map of Palestine, and photographs of places and scenery; also, Schnorr's "Bible Pictures," No. 58.†

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* Bibel in Bildern, Leipzig, 1855.

† See Ch. VI. for trees and flowers.

LESSON II.

THE JEWS.

1. Who lived in Palestine in old times?
2. What language did they speak?
3. How were they governed?
4. Who were the Romans?
5. What can you tell about the Greeks?
6. Point out Rome and Greece on the map.

Texts: Joshua xxiv. 2; Luke ii. 1; Rom. x. 12; J. xii. 20.

NOTES.

The people of Palestine were generally called Jews, from the name of one of their ancestors, Judah, just as our country is called America and we Americans; but other people often called them Hebrews, because they came from the East across the Euphrates.*

Their language was called Hebrew, and was something like what the Arabs speak to-day. The letters were quite different from ours, and the words on a page must be read from right to left.

For a great many years the Jews were an independent nation, and had kings of their own; but about 2,000 years ago the Romans, who were great conquerors, took Palestine and made it a Roman province, just as Canada is now a British province. Under the Romans, their rulers were sometimes called kings, sometimes tetrarchs, sometimes governors.

You will find Rome on the river Tiber. It was nearly 800 years old at that time, and had been a little kingdom once, then a kind of republic, then an empire. It was a warlike city and had conquered almost all the countries there were then, bringing many Eastern kings to Rome in triumph.

Another important nation was Greece, not so powerful as Rome, but much superior to it, and to the rest of the world, in literature and art. When the Romans wanted fine buildings or beautiful statues, they had to send for Greeks to make them. Before the Romans conquered Palestine, the Greeks, under Alexander the Great, had invaded the East, and left their customs and language behind them; so that in Palestine the Greek language was spoken almost as much as the Hebrew.

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* Hebrew means "from beyond."

References.

Van Lennep's "Bible Lands" (pp. 383, 386, 392); Geikie's "Life of Christ" (Ch. III., IV.); Mahaffy's "Old Greek Life" (Primer); Mahaffy's "Social Life in Greece;" Creighton's "Rome" (Primer); Smith's "Smaller History of Rome:" Ware's "Zenobia" (Letter XVIII). Show the children a Hebrew Bible; also pictures of Roman triumphs or Greek statues.

LESSON III.

VILLAGES AND CITIES.

1. How did the country people in Palestine live, and what did they do?
2. The city people?
3. How did people travel in those lands?
4. How did their cities differ from ours?
5. How did their houses differ from ours?
6. How did they dress?

Texts: Levit. xix. 9, 10; Is. iii. 18: Matt. iii. 4; v. 15, 40; vii. 13, 14; x. 27; xxiv. 17; Mark ii. 4; L. ii. 8; Heb. xiii. 2.

NOTES.

All through Palestine were little villages upon the hill-tops and in the valleys, occupied by farmers and shepherds. Many of the same crops which grow here were raised there, but their ploughs and other farming implements would look to us very odd. The grain was often trodden out by horses or cattle. There were no fences between their fields, and during the harvest the poor people were allowed to follow the reapers and pick up whatever was left behind. Their houses were low plain buildings of brick or rough stones and mud, with hardly any windows, and but two rooms, one for the family and one for the cattle. When they had a fire it was built in the middle of the room, and the smoke found its way out as it could through a hole in the roof.

In the cities were carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, smiths, potters, and other working people; and even those who were not obliged to work, were generally taught some trade. Traffic between different places in the East was carried on by means of caravans, long processions of camels, mules and asses, laden with all sorts of goods. As one of the main roads from Damascus to the Mediterranean passed near the Sea of Galilee, this brought much trade to those regions.

People had to travel generally on foot or on asses, and depended on the people of the country to entertain them. Eastern people were very hospitable, and made it a rule to welcome all strangers. They had many pleasant customs in their treatment of guests. On some of the roads were inns or caravansaries where travellers could sleep, but anyone entered who chose, and slept there without paying.

The cities had walls about them, with high watch-towers and strong gateways. The gates were closed at night, but stood open through the day, and the citizens met there to talk and lounge and trade. The streets were narrow, with few sidewalks, and the houses often jutted out overhead so as almost to touch. The houses were low, with flat roofs, and stairs leading up to the roof from the outside. Sometimes a foot-passage led from one roof to another. The large houses were built around a court-yard, in which were fountains and trees. The people lived chiefly in the open air, so that the roof was as important a part of the house as our parlors are. Families sat there, received their friends there, eat and slept there. What we should miss most in their houses would be chairs; as they all sat cross-legged on the floor or on couches. When it was cold the room was warmed by a little charcoal burning in a pan, or on a low stand. Rich people had candles to burn, but the poor must have gone to bed as soon as it was dark.

Both men and women wore long flowing robes gathered around the waist by straps or gay sashes. There was an under-tunic of cotton or camel's hair, and an outer cloak or robe of striped cotton or silk. The men wore bright turbans, the women caps covered with a handkerchief and veil. Instead of shoes they wore sandals. The women were fond of jewelry, and beside necklaces and ear-rings often wore nose-rings, and also ankle-rings which tinkled as they walked.

References.

Van Lennep's "Bible Lands" (Ch. 4, 5, 6, 7, 12. Illus. on p. 805); Thomson's "Land and Book;" Edersheim's "Sketches of Jewish Social Life" (Ch. III.-VI., XI.-XIII.); Martineau's "Eastern Life;" Conder's "Tent-Work in Palestine;" Robinson's "Biblical Researches in Palestine:" Gannett's "Childhood of Jesus" (Less. II.); Schnorr, 38, 84, 85, 183.

LESSON IV.

SOCIAL LIFE.

1. Tell something about the out-of-door life in Palestine.

2. About the home life.

3. Which do you think you should like best, their way of life or ours?

4. How did they treat their guests?

5. What musical instruments did they have?

6. What kind of schools and studies did children have?

Texts: Levit. xix. 32; 2 Sam. xix. 8; Job xxix. 7, 8; Prov. xxiv. 7; Ex. xx. 12; Col. iii. 20.

NOTES.

The Jews, like all Eastern people, lived much out-of-doors, and carried on all sorts of business in the city streets. The older citizens sat in the great gateways and talked; shop-keepers sat outside their booths shouting to passers to come and buy; country people brought their fruit and eggs to sell in the city square; religious teachers called rabbis walked about the streets, gathering little groups of listeners. It was often a very exciting and noisy scene.

Their family life was full of pretty customs, though it would seem to you very strict and religious. Long prayers were said every morning and evening; hands were washed and prayers repeated before and after every meal. On Friday night the house was always decorated for the Sabbath, and when the father came home he repeated to each child an old Hebrew blessing. I am afraid that children are not quite so respectful or obedient to their parents now a-days as they were then, and that old people are not treated with so much thoughtfulness or reverence.

Names were quite different from those given to-day, as there were no family names at all, like Jones or Smith, but people were generally distinguished from each other by adding the place where they lived, as if one of you instead of being called Henry Rice, were called Henry

of Worcester, or Main Street Henry. New names were often made for children when they were born. Girls were sometimes called after flowers, or birds, or trees.

The Jews had a morning and an evening meal. The tables were small and low, and the family sat around them on the floor, and got along very well without knives or forks, a dish of water and a towel being passed around after dinner. When there were guests at dinner, they were fond of telling stories and giving out riddles and proverbs to be guessed.

Guests were always received very cordially, with a great many bows and embraces, and were put into the best room on the roof, and treated as though they gave great pleasure by their coming. The master of the house often met them at the gate, held their stirrup while they dismounted, washed their feet when they came into the house, waited on them at table, and went part way on the road with them when they left.

They had musical instruments for their dances and songs, and also for their religious services; some like our guitars and violins; some like our drums and tamborines.

School children had not quite such hard studies or so many of them as most of you; for they were not allowed to learn about other people or foreign languages, and there was not much to learn about their own. Their only book was the Jewish Law or Scripture. The school rooms were all connected with the churches. The teacher was a sort of minister called a hazzan, who sat on a cushion at one end of the room, while the children, after taking off their shoes, squatted around on the floor. Each child held a roll of parchment in its hand, and they either recited together passages from the Scripture, or studied their lesson aloud, each trying to make more noise than the rest. Children began to learn the alphabet at 3 or 5, and went to school at 6, to read and write. As it was a hot country there were no lessons between 10 o'clock and 3; and July and August were considered vacation months, because school kept then only four hours.

References.

Van Lennep's "Bible Lands" (Ch. VI., VII., VIII.); Thomson's "Land and Book" (pp. 182, 184, &c.); Edersheim's "Jewish Social Life" (Ch. VI. IX.); Smith's "Bible Dictionary" (Art. House, &c.); Illustrations in Renan's "Vie de Jesus" (pp. 12, 18); Manning's "Those Holy Fields"*; Van Lennep's "Oriental Album."†

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* Illustrations. † Illustrations.

LESSON V.

RELIGION.

1. Whom did the Jews worship?
2. How did they worship?
3. Where was the Temple, and what can you tell about it?
4. What kind of services were held there?
5. Tell something about the priests?

Texts: Ex. xxii. 29; 1 K. v. 5; Ps. xxiv. 1*; xlviii. 1†; xcii. ‡; Is. i. 11; Micah vi. 8: Jer. xi. 13.

NOTES.

In early times the Jews, like the other nations about them, worshipped several Gods, but in later days they worshipped one God as we do, and called Him Jehovah (or Jahveh). But their ideas about God were very different from ours. Like other Eastern people they thought God would not be kind to them or forgive them when they did wrong, unless they gave him something that would please him. So when they came to worship him they brought with them the first fruits from their fields, and their best oxen or sheep or doves as offerings. At first they even sacrificed their children to him, thinking he would like that gift better than any other; but as they grew more civilized this cruel custom was given up.

Their chief place of worship was the Temple at Jerusalem, a building not much larger than this church, but built of marble and gold with other rich materials, surrounded by large terraces and splendid porticos with tall columns, and placed upon one of the highest hills in the city. The building itself was looked upon as a house for Jehovah to live in, and was too sacred for any but priests to enter, so the people gathered around it and worshipped in the open air.

As the people could not offer sacrifices or take much part in the service themselves, there were great numbers of priests to act for them. The priests were divided into twenty-four classes, one of which was always on duty at the Temple. They wore robes of pure white linen,

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* Special Psalm for Sunday.

† Psalm for Monday.

‡ Psalm for Sabbath.

with a bonnet and long linen girdle. At their head was the High Priest, the only one who ever went into the inner room of the Temple. He wore very splendid robes of blue and gold, with a breastplate covered with jewels, a mitre and a golden frontlet.

There were services in the Temple every day, morning and evening. At this daily service, a lamb was killed and offered on the altar, trumpets were blown calling the people together, incense was burned, and prayers repeated, and then a large choir of priests chanted a hymn or psalm, accompanied by cymbals or other instrumental music. Sometimes a Psalm* was sung verse by verse by the priests the people responding Hallelu-Jah (Praise Jehovah) after each verse. Many of these hymns, written at different times, were collected together, with other Hebrew poems, and called the Book of Psalms.

REFERENCES.

Edersheim's "Temple and its Services" (pp. 22, 72, 52, 142, 191, &c.); V. Lennep's "Bible Lands;" "Land and Book;" Smith's "Bible Dictionary" (Art. Temple, Priest, &c.); "Vie de Jesus" (illustration on p. 152); Stanley's "Jewish Church" (I. 186, &c.); Geikie's "Life of Christ" (Ch. VII.); Kuenen's "Religion of Israel" (I. 18, 96, 223); "Jewish History, told for Children."

*See CXIII.

LESSON VI.

SYNAGOGUES.

1. What is a synagogue?

2. What was the difference between the synagogue and the temple?

3. Describe the service in the synagogue.

4. Did the Jews have prayers or singing in their service?

5. Did they have any Sunday Schools?

Texts: I. Chron. xvi. 36; Matt. vi. 5, 7; Acts xiii. 15.

NOTES.

For a great many years the Jews had no place of worship except the Temple, but afterwards other houses called synagogues were built in all the larger towns and cities. The synagogue was a kind of church, but was used on Saturday instead of Sunday, and generally on Monday and Thursday also. It was a plain looking building, standing on high ground where all could see it, and always so placed that every one in going in should face toward the Temple at Jerusalem, where Jehovah was supposed to dwell. Inside there were no seats, but only a platform with a high desk near the middle of the room, and behind it a niche holding a box or ark filled with rolls of parchment. The niche was the holiest part of the room, and had a curtain hanging before it, and a lamp always burning above it. The men were in one part of the room, the women in another, and all either stood or sat upon the floor.

There was no special minister for a synagogue, as in our churches, but the "rulers" of the synagogue chose anyone they pleased each day to conduct the services. He began by repeating prayers and verses in regular order, the people answering "amen;" then rolls from the ark were handed him, and he went up into the desk or pulpit, and read passages from what the Jews call the "Law and the Prophets;" afterwards by way of a sermon, he sat down and explained what he had read, or made a short address. During the prayers the people stood with their hands folded, or knelt, or else threw themselves flat upon their faces.

In early times there were no prayers at all in the Jewish service, and there never were any like those we hear in our churches. But in

later times fixed forms of prayer were used in the synagogues and also at home and on the streets. Some thought that the more prayers they said the better they were, especially if men saw them doing it; so they were often seen standing at the synagogue door and repeating several prayers before going in.

There were no priests in the synagogue and no altar, so that no one went there to offer sacrifices, but only to listen to the Scriptures and prayers. There was no music or singing as in the Temple. Of course those who lived away from Jerusalem had no place of worship except the synagogue, but all the Jews were expected to go to the Temple three times a year.

There was no difference between Sunday Schools and day schools, for all schools were held in the synagogue, and children studied the Scriptures every day. Whether they sang hymns or had libraries, I do not know; but they were all in one class, and the teacher was always a man.

References.

Edersheim's "Jewish Social Life;" Edersheim's "Temple and Its Services;" "Bible Lands" (pp. 593, 648, 719, 721, 758); "Land and Book;" Smith's "Dictionary" (Art. Synagogue); "Illustrated Renan" (p. 85); "Bible for Young People"* (V. 178).

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* Or Bible for Learners.

LESSON VII.

RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS.

1. What was the Jewish Sabbath?
2. What did the Jews mean by Feasts?
3. What was a Phylactery?
4. What other peculiar customs can you mention?
5. What was a Rabbi?

Texts: Ex. xx. 8; Num. xv. 38, 39; Deut. vi. 8, 9; xvi. 13; Matt. xxiii. 5, 7, 8; xxiv. 20; Mark ii. 23, 24.

NOTES.

Sabbath means day of rest, and was the Jewish name for Saturday. It was their holiest day, and was kept much more strictly, both at home and at the Temple, than Sunday is with us. It began on Friday evening, as the Jews considered sunset the beginning of the day instead of the end. When three loud blasts of a trumpet were heard from the Temple, Friday afternoon, every one knew that the Sabbath had begun. All work of every kind was stopped immediately, a lamp was lighted in each house, the rooms were decorated and the table spread. In the Temple and in the synagogues the most important services of the week were held; at home the best clothes were worn; meals were better than on any other day; no hard lessons were learned, and the poor and strangers were sure to be remembered. It was considered very wicked for either man or beast to do any work on the Sabbath, and there were many strange laws telling them what to do and what not to do. Travellers were forbidden to go more than a mile on that day. Some even thought that it was wrong for flax to be drying itself on the Sabbath, or for wool to be dyeing.

Several times in the year there were special services at the Temple, with great feasting and rejoicing, and immense crowds gathered from all parts of Palestine. These were called Feasts, and were in celebration of some important events in Jewish history. Some lasted seven or eight days, and more than a million strangers sometimes attended them, and crowded Jerusalem to overflowing. At such times every house took in as many guests as it could, and a curtain hanging before a door meant that there was still room for more. The pilgrims came to Jerusalem in long processions, singing hymns, and bringing offerings as they marched. At one feast, held in Oc-

tober, they lived for seven days in huts of green boughs or in tents (Tabernacles), in memory of the time when the whole nation were wandering about with tents. These huts were set up all around Jerusalem, and even in the streets and on the roofs. At another (Dedication) the Temple and all the houses in Jerusalem were illuminated for eight nights. In each house, one candle was lighted for each member of the family the first night, two for each member the second night, and so on through the week. Some of these processions of pilgrims were very picturesque, as when the "first fruits" were brought to the Temple. First came a man playing a pipe, then a bullock with gilded horns and garlands, then pilgrims, singing as they came, and carrying gold and silver baskets filled with fruit. The psalms called "Songs of Degrees" or "Steps,"* were sung by these processions.

Some of the Jews who were very superstitious, or wished to make a show of their religion, wore singular little cases tied to their arms, or bound upon their foreheads, called Phylacteries. In these cases were little strips of parchment covered with texts, which were thought to give the wearer great sanctity, protecting him from danger by their magic power, and driving away evil spirits. It was supposed that wounds could be healed by touching them, or children put to sleep. There was another charm quite similar to this, called a Mesusah, which was hung in a metal case on door-posts, either inside the house or outside, for each one who went in or out to touch as he passed, and then kiss his fingers very reverently, as though receiving a blessing from it.† Another peculiar belief among the Jews was that the fringe of a dress was sacred, as it was to remind the wearer of God's commandments.‡ Many made their fringes wide, therefore, to be thought very religious; and sick people thought that by touching the edge of a great man's robe they would be healed.

Learned men among the Jews were treated with great reverence, and called Masters or Rabbis. Some had young men studying the law with them; others taught in the synagogues, or gathered whom they could find in the streets and preached to them.

REFERENCES.

Edersheim's "Jewish Social Life" (Ch. VII.); Edersheim's "Temple and Its Services" (Ch. IX., XIV., XVII.); "Land and Book;" Smith's "Bible Dic." (Art. Phylactery, Feasts, &c.); "Bible Lands;" Helon's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, I.; Plumptre's "Bible Educator."

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* Ps. CXX., CXXI.

† On the parchment were the texts, Deut. VI. 4–9; XI. 13–21.

‡ Num. XV. 37.

LESSON VIII.

ABRAHAM.

1. Who was Abraham?
2. What old book is there that tells about him?
3. Do you think this book was written while he lived?
4. How does such a book differ from the histories that are written now?
5. What countries did Abraham live in?
6. Who were his wives and children?
7. Tell something about Ishmael.
8. Tell something about Isaac.
9. Who were Esau and Jacob?
10. Who are meant by the Patriarchs?

Texts: Gen. i. 1, 2; viii. 22; ix. 13; xi. 4; xiii. 2; xxi. 14; xxii. 2; xxv. 27; xxviii. 12; Matt. iii. 9.

NOTES.

One of the oldest ancestors whom the Jews could remember was Abraham. He lived in very old times, many hundred years before there were any books, and before any one could read or write, so that we can know nothing about him except what happened to be remembered through all those years before writing began. Of course such accounts must be very imperfect, for people do not always repeat things just as they heard them, and often like to make a good story out of a very little incident; but this is all that we have, and it may be that when so many things had to be committed to memory, memories were better than they are now. At any rate, each generation had a great many anecdotes to tell of those who had lived before them, and fathers were fond of telling these to their children, sometimes in prose, sometimes in poetry. All early history was made up of stories like these. One of the oldest collections of such tales and poems is the Book of Genesis. It begins with a poetic account of the creation of the world, and then tells of a great flood which the Jews thought had covered the whole earth, and then how the only family which escaped the flood was scattered over many countries, and began to talk many different languages. After this it tells about Abraham and his descendants.

Abraham came from a mountain region far north of Palestine, near where the great river Euphrates rises. The people of that country wandered about in little bands or tribes, settling down wherever they found good pasturage and water for their sheep and cattle. From the description of them in Genesis, they must have looked quite like the Bedouin Arabs who rove through the same regions to-day, living in black tents, carrying their property on camels and asses, with long troops of sheep and cattle driven by slaves, and with a picturesque chief or Sh'ik dressed in a long red cloak, with a bright handkerchief bound around his head and floating over his shoulders. Abraham seems to have been one of the most powerful of these shepherd-princes, "very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold," and having many slaves and followers. With these he once crossed the Euphrates, and began a long journey southward, partly in search of fresh pastures, and partly, as the story says, because he had outgrown the religious customs of his people, and believed that God was calling him away from their idolatries. After going as far south as Egypt, and being driven back, he settled down at last just west of the Dead Sea, among some tribes called Canaanites, where he staid the rest of his life.

In those rude and barbarous days men had several wives instead of only one, and the more wealthy and powerful the chief the more wives he had. One of Abraham's wives was Sarah, a woman of his own race, another was Hagar, an Egyptian, another was Keturah. His oldest child Ishmael, the son of Hagar, was very dear to Abraham, and would have been chief after him, had not the mother and child been driven out, by Sarah's hatred, into the Arabian wilderness among the serpents and wild beasts. The account of this in Genesis is very touching, and tells how Hagar and Ishmael were saved, and how the descendants of Ishmael became wild Arab tribes wandering through the deserts. Meantime Isaac, Sarah's son, remained with his father, and became chief after his death.

One of the most interesting stories in Genesis tells how Abraham, who had always seen children sacrificed to the Gods, dreamed once that God commanded him to offer his boy Isaac. So he took Isaac to a mountain, built an altar, and put wood upon it, but just as he was about to kill the child, his love for him made him feel that God could not require such an act, and he determined to offer a ram instead. The Jews always remembered this incident, and believed that God put the ram there on purpose to convince Abraham that he did not really wish him to do so cruel a thing. It was a long time before they wholly gave up this inhuman practice, but this was probably the first step towards doing so. The last step was not taken of course until they

learned that God did not wish any life sacrificed to him, whether of children or of animals; but this they could not understand till after many centuries of progress.

Isaac afterwards had two sons called Esau and Jacob, and the rest of Genesis tells of them and their descendants. Esau was the older, but Jacob was the mother's favorite, and succeeded, by some very ingenious tricks, in getting away from his brother the rights that belonged to him, and making himself a rich and powerful chieftain. Another name for Jacob was Israel, and after him the Jews were often called Israelites. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were called Patriarchs.

References.

Stanley's "Jewish Church" (I. 1–56); "Bible for Young People" (I. 140–193); Heilprin's Histor. Poetry of the Ancient Hebrews (I. 1–45); Higginson's "Spirit of the Bible" (I. 149); Bartram's "Stories from Book of Genesis;" Frothingham's Stories of the Patriarchs;" Ewald's "Hist. of Israel" (I.); Hedge's "Primeval World of Heb. Tradition" (Ch. XI.); Photograph of Guercino's "Hagar and Ishmael;" Schnorr's "Bible Pictures" (1 to 37);* Wesley's Hymn,—"Come, oh thou traveller unknown."

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* "Bibel in Bildern," Leipzig, 1855.

LESSON IX.

MOSES.

1. What can you tell about Joseph?
2. What happened to the Jews in Egypt?
3. Who was Moses, and how did he grow up?
4. What did he do for his people?
5. How did they escape from Egypt?
6. When was this?
7. Where is the story told?
8. Where did they go on leaving Egypt?
9. What can you tell about their wanderings?

Texts: Gen. xxxvii. 3; Ex. ii. 3; iii. 5; xv. 21; Ps. lxvii. 16; lxxviii. 13; Acts vii. 22.

NOTES.

One of the oldest and prettiest stories in Genesis tells how Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, was sold by his brothers to some travelling merchants who carried him to Egypt, where he became a powerful prince. Afterwards he sent for his father and brothers, told them who he was, and gave them a home in Egypt where they lived always afterwards. After a great many years, when they had grown from a single family into a large tribe, Pharaoh king of Egypt began to treat them very cruelly, and finally made slaves of them, to work in his fields and help build his splendid palaces and cities and pyramids. As they were much more barbarous than the Egyptians, they submitted to this for a long time; but at last a remarkable man appeared among them who determined to free them from their slavery. His name was Moses, and many wonderful stories were told, in Jewish and other books, about his birth and early life. He was said to have grown up in the royal court, and as Egypt was then the most civilized and learned country in the world, and had a purer religion than other nations about it, Moses became a wiser man, with much higher religious ideas, than his Hebrew brethren. Fortunately he did not despise them on that account, or lose his love for them, but only longed to set them free. One of the earliest stories about him is of his killing an Egyptian whom he saw beating a Hebrew slave; so that he had to flee from Egypt, and live in another country. After some years he returned,

but found it a much harder task than he thought to free a people who had become so degraded by slavery that they had no desire for freedom. As they had always lived in Egypt they did not wish to live anywhere else, or to make a nation by themselves. Beside this, the king was very unwilling to lose his slaves, and only made them work the harder when Moses urged him to let them go. But by-and-by, as the story tells us, the land was overrun by frogs and locusts and flies and other plagues, which the king thought Moses had brought upon him, and so he was frightened into allowing the Hebrews to leave the country. As soon as they had started he repented and pursued them with his army, but they had already crossed the Red Sea, and the waters rose as he attempted to follow, and many of his soldiers and horses were drowned.

These were afterwards considered great events in the nation's history, and the plagues which visited Pharaoh, and the rising of the Red Sea to destroy his hosts, were always spoken of as special acts of God to set his people free. The story is told in the Book of Exodus, which is so named because it describes the escape of the Israelites from Egypt; but many poems were written about these events, which are found in different parts of the Bible. Probably the oldest accounts were all in poetry.* All this happened probably about B. C. 1300; but the accounts were written long afterwards, when the events were no longer very distinctly remembered, and so became much exaggerated no doubt. The mummy of the king † who persecuted the Hebrews, has just been found near Thebes, exactly as it was when buried 3,000 years ago.‡

After escaping from Egypt, the Jews wandered about in Arabia forty or fifty years, not being civilized or united enough to establish themselves anywhere as a nation. Many stories were told afterwards about their sufferings on these marches. Once they were almost perishing from thirst in a desert, and were murmuring against Moses, and asking him, "Why hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" when Moses brought them to a spring gushing out of a solid rock; a sight which astonished them so much that they thought Moses had brought the water by striking the rock. Once when they were nearly starved, great flocks of quails flew by and lighted on the ground about them, as if on purpose to be caught. Another time, they found scattered over the ground a very sweet white gum which flows from the bark of trees,

* Ex. XV. 1–21.

† Rameses II.

‡ London Times, August 4, 1881.

but which seemed to them to have dropped from the sky. They called it manna. All these things were looked upon afterwards as proofs of God's special care of them; for the Jews had a beautiful way of believing that every good thing which happened to them came directly from God and showed his love.

References.

Kuenen's "Religion of Israel" (I. Ch. II., V.); Ewald's "Hist. of Israel" (I. 386–423; II. 1-228); "Bible for Young People" (II. 1–124); Knappert's "Religion of Israel" (Ch. VI.); Stanley's "History of the Jewish Church" (I. 84–226); Heilprin's Poetry of Anc. Hebrews (I. 46–123;) Higginson's "Spirit of the Bible" (I. 186–210); Bartram's "Stories from Genesis;" Chadwick's "Bible of To-day;" Martineau's "Eastern Life;" Frothingham's Patriarchs" (pp. 141, 164); Schiller's "Works" (Vol. IX.*); Brugsch-Bey's "True Story of Exodus;" Lanoye's "Rameses the Great;" Photograph of M. Angelo's "Moses;" Schnorr's "Pictures" (38 to 52).

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* Essay on Moses.

LESSON X.

MOSES.

1. How did Moses divide the people?
2. Can you repeat any of the laws which he gave them?
3. Where is Mt. Sinai?
4. How did he change their religious customs?
5. What did he teach them about the Sabbath?
6. What was the Ark?
7. Where were the Jews when Moses died?
8. What do you think of Moses' character?
9. What books and laws were afterwards called by Moses' name.

Texts: Ex. xx. 1–17; xiii. 21; xvi. 14, 15; Deut. iii. 27; xxxiv. 10.

NOTES.

When the Jews came from Egypt they had no government or laws, and no regular worship. One of the first things which Moses seems to have done was to divide them into great families or tribes, each with leaders of its own. These were named after some of their ancestors, and were afterwards called the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The laws which Moses made were so excellent, and taught the people to lead such good lives, that the Jews supposed he had received them directly from Jehovah on Mt. Sinai, a mountain which all the people in that region considered a holy place. It would seem to us very strange to think of God as coming down to the earth and talking with a man, but in those days people imagined that such things happened often. At any rate, there is a fine poetic passage in Exodus which describes the Lord coming down in lightning and thunder and smoke, to meet Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai, while the whole people stood around. A few of these laws which Moses gave have been preserved very nearly as he spoke them. They are called the Ten Commandments, and are still very good lessons for children to learn, and for grown up people to remember.

Moses taught them many new religious customs also. In Egypt, it seems, the Jews had many different gods,* and even worshipped ani-

* Joshua XXIV. 14; Ezek. XX. 7, 8.

mals, as they had seen the Egyptians do.* Very likely each family or tribe had idols of its own. But Moses taught them about Jehovah, a much greater and more powerful God than any whom they worshipped, and one who would help them if they obeyed him, to conquer all their enemies and become a strong and united nation. They had never heard the name before,† but from that time, as Moses proved so wise and good a leader, and they were saved from so many dangers, their faith in Jehovah grew stronger and stronger, until in time he became the only God whom they worshipped. In the end they learned to believe in him as the only God of all nations.

It was about this time that the Jews began to observe the Sabbath, and Moses was perhaps the first one to teach them to do so. At any rate he gave this as one of his ten commandments. In later times, when these events came to be written down, there were different accounts of the origin of the Sabbath; some supposing that it was established to celebrate the escape from Egypt,‡ others having the strange idea that God, after creating the world in six days, had rested from his fatigue on the seventh day, and so made it holy.§

Moses also introduced what was called the ark; a sort of sacred chest, similar to one which was used in Egyptian worship, and serving the Jews through all their wanderings as an object of religious worship. In those days God was never thought of as present everywhere, but was supposed to come wherever temples or altars were built for him. Before the Jews built their temple, they believed Jehovah somehow dwelt in the ark, and so carried it with them wherever they went. In their marches, and sometimes when they went into battle, it was borne at their head; whenever they stopped it was placed under a tent or tabernacle, and kept very holy. It was not for many years that they learned that God is in all places alike.

So the Jews wandered about year after year. At first Moses led them southward towards Mt. Sinai, where he had lived while in exile; then, as this was a rocky sterile region, they went northward towards the more fertile lands of Canaan, but were driven back as they tried to settle there; finally they crossed the mountains to the east, and then marched north as far as the Dead Sea and the river Jordan. Here they conquered the country and took possession of it, killing the inhabitants, old and young, and burning their cities, after the cruel cus-

* Ex. XXXII. 4.
† Ex. III. 13; VI. 3.
‡ Deut. V. 15.
§ Ex. XX. 11.

toms of that day.* Two of the tribes remained here always. The others Moses was very anxious to lead across the Jordan into Canaan; remembering, no doubt, some of the old traditions which told of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in Canaan. But Moses died just as they reached the Jordan, and had to leave that part of his work to be done by others.

The five Hebrew books which tell of the Patriarchs and of Moses are sometimes called the Books of Moses, sometimes by the Greek name Pentateuch.†

References.

(*Same as for last lesson.*)

Also, Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine;" Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians;" Lenormant and Chevallier's "Manual of Ancient History of the East" (I. B. 3); Bunsen's "Bibelwerk" (I., V.); Bunsen's "Egypt's Place in Universal History" (V.);‡ Hymns — Scott's "When Israel of the Lord beloved;" Mrs. Alexander's "On Nebo's Lonely Mountain."

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* Num. XXXI. 10; Deut. II. 34.

† A volume of five books.

‡ Funereal Ritual; showing Egyptian moral teaching.

LESSON XI.

JOSHUA AND THE JUDGES.

1. Who was Joshua, and what book tells about him?
2. Into what country did he lead the Israelites?
3. What cities were captured, and where are they?
4. How were the inhabitants treated?
5. Do you think this treatment right?
6. Did the Jews think it right?
7. Who was Deborah?
8. Who was Jephthah?
9. Who was Samson?
10. What were these called, and why were they called so?
11. Did the Israelites become a nation under the Judges?
12. What can you tell about their religion at this time?

Texts: Josh. x. 12; xxiv. 15; Judg. v. 4, 20; xiv. 14; xv. 16.

NOTES.

After Moses died other leaders appeared, many of them brave soldiers, but none able like him to make laws for the people, or give them religious teaching. First came Joshua. There is a book called the Book of Joshua,* not because Joshua wrote it, but because it tells us all that we know about him. He was a good fighter, and led a large army of the Israelites across one of the fords of the Jordan, captured two of the first cities they came to,† and put all the men women and children to death. This seems to us very barbarous, as it really was. But there were strange religious ideas in those days, as you have seen, and among them one of the strangest was, that whenever a city was taken in war by the help of any God, all the people and animals in the city must be killed as a sacrifice to that God. It is hard to believe that people could ever have been sincere in such ideas of God; but they really were. Joshua lived long enough to take part in many such victories as this over the Canaanites. Towns were burned, inhabitants were massacred or made slaves, kings were dreadfully tortured,

* Just as the first five are called Books of Moses.

† Jericho and Ai.

cattle were maimed or killed, and the new comers made themselves terribly feared in the south part of Canaan. Afterwards, when they had lived there many centuries, and these conquests came to be written about, they all seemed very wonderful, and were described in the most poetic language. Some of these stories are still found in the Book of Joshua; other collections of them were lost. A poem from one of these lost books, called the Book of Jasher, is quoted in Joshua,* and tells how "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed," while Jehovah helped the Israelites to conquer their enemies. Very likely all these tales about the sun and moon, about Jericho, and about the crossing of the Jordan, were at first songs sung to Hebrew children.

After Joshua's death, the tribes wandered through Canaan, some in one direction some in another, conquering the inhabitants and seizing their land where they could, but often conquered themselves and made slaves again, as they had been in Egypt. At one time the Midianites from the eastern deserts, at another the Philistines from the Mediterranean coast, defeated them in battle, and for many years treated them as cruelly as they treated the Canaanites. In some places they made friends with the inhabitants, settled down among them as one people, married their daughters, and worshipped their Gods.†

So two or three hundred years went by. All that we know of this long period is through the tales told about some of their leaders who had been brave enough to make their names remembered, or had done some remarkable things of which songs were sung. In later times these leaders, though many were mere soldiers, were all called "judges;" probably because those who led the army in war continued to rule the people in peace, and did whatever governing or judging there was. One of these was a woman named Deborah; a sort of Joan of Arc, who lived when the people were held in slavery by a strong Canaanite king, and aroused them by her courage and eloquence so that they gained a great victory over their conqueror. The song which she sang after this battle is very curious, and is one of the oldest passages in the Bible.‡ It describes the battle in a very spirited way, praises the tribes that took part in it, and heaps bitter reproaches on those who were afraid and held back. The last verses, which you will often hear spoken of, sing the praises of a cruel woman called Jael, who enticed the Canaanite captain, Sisera, into her tent and killed him by driving a nail through his temples. It is hard for us to understand that a treacherous deed like this, done by a woman too, could ever

* X. 12, 13.

† Judges II. 11–13; III. 5, 6.

‡ Judges V.: Allen's "Hebrew Men and Times" (p. 84).

have been thought honorable or right; but we see that it was, and a great many pictures have been painted of Jael killing Sisera, as if the subject were a very fine one.

Another judge whose name you will often hear, was Jephthah, of whom a touching story is told. Once as he was going into battle he promised if Jehovah gave him the victory, to sacrifice whatever came out of his house to meet him when he came home. He won the victory, but as he returned to his house, as the story tells us, "behold his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was his only child." It was a terrible trial, but a promise to Jehovah was too sacred to be broken, and the daughter herself begged him to keep it, so that she was sacrificed. It was only in these rude and violent days that human sacrifices were permitted among the Israelites; afterwards they were given up entirely.

Still another judge was Samson; a man of whom nothing great or good is told, and who was celebrated only for his enormous strength. Strange feats were attributed to him in the stories of those days, with many exaggerations no doubt; such as carrying off the gates of a city on his shoulders, tearing a lion to pieces with his hands, tying foxes together by their tails with a firebrand between them, pulling a great stone temple down on the heads of his foes, and killing himself and them together. He was a sort of Hercules, and made the Philistines, who were then the worst enemies of the Israelites, very much afraid of him.

All this time there was no union among the Israelites, as each tribe or family looked after itself, some joining forces with others now and then. The Judges were chieftains of single tribes, and there was no one ruler over the whole people, and no one form of religion. Some worshipped Jehovah, others the Gods of Canaan,* and all, as we have seen, practised very barbarous religious rites. At this time, two hundred years after leaving Egypt, it looked very much as if they all would be scattered among the Canaanites, with no government or religion of their own, never to be heard of as a separate nation at all.

References.

(*Same as before.*)

Also, Heilprin (I. 124–172); Milton's "Samson Agonistes;" Schnorr, 69, 70, 74, 78, 79, 80, 82; Tennyson's "Dream of Fair Women;" Byron's "Hebrew Melodies."

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* Josh. XXIV. 23; Judges II. 12; III. 6; VIII. 33; X. 6.

LESSON XII.

SAMUEL.

1. Where was Shiloh, and what was there?
2. Who was Samuel?
3. How were his early years spent?
4. How did he unite the Israelites?
5. What did they ask of him?
6. Why did he oppose this?
7. Who was the first king of Israel?
8. How did Samuel and he agree?
9. Describe Saul's death.
10. What do you think of Samuel's character?

Texts: 1 Sam. II. 2, 7, 18; IV. 22; X. 24; XV. 22; XVI. 7; Judges IX. 8; 2 Sam. I. 19.

NOTES.

At last another great leader appeared, and brought many of the scattered tribes together under one government. His name was Samuel. When quite a young child his mother had placed him at Shiloh to help the priests, or "lent him to the Lord," as she expressed it. Shiloh was a little place in the centre of Canaan where the ark had been first brought on entering Canaan, and where all the Israelites who worshipped Jehovah got into the way of coming together once a year. So a sort of national worship began, with regular priests, who appear now for the first time. Samuel grew up at Shiloh under the priest Eli, where he saw many evil practices which grieved him very much, and at last had a dream in which he heard Jehovah calling him by name, and saying that the priests should be punished for their wickedness. Soon after this a great calamity happened which every one thought a fulfilment of this dream. The Philistines defeated the Israelites in a great battle, and not only killed the priests, but also captured the sacred ark which had been carried into battle to make sure of victory.

Then all eyes turned to Samuel, whom the people had already begun to revere for his wisdom and goodness, as well as for his strange dreams which, in those superstitious days, were considered very sacred. Men who had these visions were supposed to be special favorites of God

and were called seers, and afterwards prophets. So Samuel became a ruler of the people, and went to three little towns in turn each year to judge those who came to him. He was anxious too, as Moses had been before, to unite all the tribes more closely together, and he knew the only way to do this was to persuade them to give up the vile religious customs into which they had fallen, and all worship one God.*

But no sooner had he succeeded in bringing a few of the tribes together in this way, than they began to beg him, as he was growing old himself, to give them a king, so that they might be like the other nations about them. Once before they had made the same request, but had been put off then with a little fable about the trees which wanted a king, and could get nothing but the dry and prickly bramble bush to consent to rule them.† This time they were more serious about it, and Samuel grew very angry with them. The people of Israel had never had a king, and Samuel thought that a nation which had Jehovah for its God needed no other ruler than Jehovah himself. Still the people shouted, "Nay, but we will have a king over us," and Samuel was forced to give them one much against his will. According to one account this first king was chosen by lot;‡ but according to another, the Lord brought him to Samuel to enquire for some asses which were lost, and Samuel anointed him at once. § At any rate the man chosen was Saul, one of the tribe of Benjamin, "a choice young man and a goodly; from his shoulders and upward higher than any of the people." Perhaps he had already distinguished himself by his courage or strength in war. "And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen? And all the people shouted, God save the king."

But in whatever way Saul was chosen, Samuel never became reconciled, and often opposed him bitterly. Once when Saul had taken a city, and killed all the men women and children in it, but spared the king, Agag, through kindness of heart, Samuel rebuked him severely, not for slaughtering the people, but for saving the king. He even went so far as to kill the king himself, and cut him in pieces as a sacrifice to Jehovah, on the ground that the Lord required all the lives in a captured city to be offered to him. In this Saul seems to us, of course, much nobler than Samuel; but according to the strange religious ideas of that time Samuel was right. Saul never proved a great

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* 1 Sam. VII. 3, 4.

† Judges IX. 7–15. Stanley's "Jewish Church" I. 386.

‡ 1 Sam. X. 17–24.

§ 1 Sam. IX. 15—X. 1.

ruler or a great man, but he won many victories for his people, and finally killed himself in battle, when defeated by the Philistines. The books that tell of these events are called the Books of Samuel, and in them we see how the wandering Israelite tribes at last became a nation.

References.

(*Same as before.*)

Also, Newman's "History of Hebrew Monarchy;" Maurice's "Prophets and Kings;" Heilprin (I. 173–200); Engraving of Allston's "Saul and the Witch of Endor;" Schnorr, (86-98); Browning's "Saul."

LESSON XIII.

DAVID.

1. Who was David?
2. To what tribe did he belong?
3. What anecdotes can you tell of his early life?
4. What strong friendship did he form?
5. When did he become king, and how?
6. What city did he make his capital?
7. What did he do with the ark?
8. What kind of a reign did he have?
9. Who rebelled against him?
10. Why is he sometimes called a psalmist?
11. What do you think of his character?

Texts: 1 S., xvi. 23; xvii. 40; xviii. 7; xxiv. 17; 2 S. i., 23, 25, 26; xxii. 2, 12; Ps. xxiv. 7–10; li. 10.

NOTES.

After Saul's death his son Ishbosheth became king. But there was no real union yet between the tribes, so that Judah, a strong southern tribe, refused to accept him, and set up another king of its own named David. Many romantic stories are told about David's early life, not agreeing very well with each other, but all showing that he attracted great attention while still a boy. One tells of his killing with his sling a big Philistine giant named Goliath, of whom the whole army was afraid, so that the king made him a captain over his troops; another tells of his being called in once when the king was sick to play the harp to him, and of his playing so beautifully that the "evil spirit (or sickness) departed from him, and he was well." In any case, Saul became very fond of him, and a strong attachment sprang up between David and the king's son Jonathan, which has become one of the most celebrated friendships in history. There is nothing in the Old Testament more beautiful than the chapters which describe this, and the song sung by David after the death of Saul and Jonathan.

Afterwards David became so much beloved by the people for his beauty and his courage that Saul grew very jealous and drove him out into the mountains. David took refuge in the cave of Adullam, where

"every one in distress, and every one in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them." Saul once tried to seize him and fell into David's hands but David spared his life and remained an outlaw, part of the time in the service of the Philistines, until Saul's death.

As soon as Saul died and his son succeeded him, the people of Judah remembered David, and called him home to be their king. So there were two kings, one in the north and one in the south, and there were wars between them for seven years, when all the tribes came to David at Hebron, and made him king over the whole land. This was about 1050 B. C.

David's first act was to seize a strong Canaanite city on a steep hill-top, and make it the capital of his new kingdom, changing its name from Jebus to Jerusalem. Then having a capital he determined to bring the ark there, that Jehovah might dwell in Jerusalem, and all the tribes come there to worship together. The ark had been lying for some years in a little village, where neither the Philistines, who had taken it in battle, nor the Jews, had dared to touch it, through superstitious fear of it; but David formed a long procession, with singers and trumpeters, and brought the ark into Jerusalem with great pomp, leaping and dancing before it as it came into the city.*

David was a great warrior, and conquered nearly all the nations from the Mediterranean almost to the Euphrates, making some of them pay him tribute, and destroying others with horrible tortures. For a time the kingdom of Israel became one of the mightiest in the East, and David's palace was thronged by powerful nobles with princely retinues, and was the scene, in times of peace, of much splendor and luxury. But all this luxury caused great corruption also, and the heavy taxes which the people had to pay made them very restless and discontented. Two of his own sons rebelled against him, and one of them, Absalom, who had gone to war against his father, was killed in a singular way just as he had made himself king. This was the greatest grief of David's life, and he mourned over Absalom very long and bitterly.

So the last part of David's life was much more unhappy and disgraceful than the first, and David himself lost the nobleness and courage of his earlier days, and became timid and revengeful. One of his last acts was to direct that two of his subjects whom he had feared during his life, and had not ventured to resist, should be executed after his death. Another great crime which he committed much earlier in life, was in taking Bathsheba to be his wife, and di-

* Ps. XXIV. 7–10.

recting that her husband, who was one of his officers, should be put in the most dangerous place in battle where he was sure to be killed. Fortunately there was one man at court, a prophet named Nathan, who was bold enough to tell the king to his face how wicked a thing he had done, so that David confessed his fault and showed great penitence and grief. The story which Nathan told the king to convince him of his guilt is very interesting, and shows how the prophets, who were the only preachers in those days, talked and taught.

The most interesting trait in David's character was his love of music. He is always spoken of in history as a "psalmist," and is said to have sung and played upon the harp, besides inventing new musical instruments. Some of the hymns which were afterwards sung in the Temple were thought to have been written by him, and afterwards when all the Temple-hymns were collected, they were called after him the Psalms of David. Though he did not write them all, yet he set the example, no doubt, which so many others followed.

On the whole, though David did so many things which do not seem to us either wise or good, yet for those days he was really a very great king, who not only raised his nation from feebleness to power and fame, but also gave the people some higher tastes than love of luxury or of war.

References.

(*Same as before.*)

Davidson's "Introduction to Old Testament;" Milman's "History of the Jews;" Heilprin's "Poetry of Anc. Hebrews" (I. 201–II. 6); Herder's "Spirit of Hebrew Poetry;" Noyes's "Translation of the Psalms;" Michael Angelo's Statue of David; Schnorr, 99–187.

LESSON XIV.

SOLOMON.

1. Who was Solomon?
2. What was the character of his reign?
3. What trade or commerce did he introduce?
4. What buildings did he erect?
5. What can you tell about his religious faith?
6. What is meant by speaking of Solomon's wisdom?
7. How do you think he compares with his father David?
8. What two kingdoms were formed after his death?
9. About what year did he die?
10. How long did the union of the twelve tribes last?

Texts: 1 K., ii. 2; iii. 12, 13; iv. 25, 30, 33; ix. 26, 28; x. 1, 27; xii. 11; Song of Solomon, ii. 11, 12; Matt. vi. 28, 29.

NOTES.

Before David's death, Solomon, son of Bathsheba, was anointed king, to prevent any of David's other sons from seizing the throne. Solomon was no warrior like his father, and even lost some of the territory which David had conquered, but he understood the arts of peace very well, and the nation grew in wealth and prosperity under him as it had never done before. In later times it was always said, "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and fig tree, all the days of Solomon."

Before that time the Jews had had very little to do with other nations except in war, but Solomon established trade with several of his neighbors, and made alliances with the King of Egypt, and other kings, by marrying their daughters. He built ships on the Red Sea, manning them with Phœnician sailors, as his own people were not seamen; he bought cedar and fir timber in Tyre, spices in Arabia, horses in Egypt, gold and precious stones, peacocks and apes in India. In this way he gave his people new occupations and greater knowledge of the world, and brought into the country a great deal of wealth. "All King Solomon's drinking vessels, and all the vessels of the house," we are told, "were of pure gold;" "and the king made silver to be

in Jerusalem as stones." The accounts of the rich presents he received, of the food that was eaten in his palace every day, and of the number of wives and horses and servants that he had, read like a fairy tale.

A great deal of this money was spent in adorning his capital. The tent or tabernacle in which the ark had always stood, seemed much too simple for so magnificent a monarch, and a splendid temple was built, small in size but of the costliest materials, which it took seven years and a half to finish. The king is said to have sacrificed 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep in dedicating this temple. Much larger and more magnificent than the temple was the king's palace, beside which was another palace for his Egyptian queen, and another still for state purposes. All this splendor made Solomon celebrated throughout the East; and a story is told of an Arabian queen who came from Sheba to Jerusalem purposely to see Solomon's riches, and to ask him some hard questions.

For Solomon was quite as famous for his wisdom as for his wealth. Kings are not apt to be very learned men, but we must remember that "wisdom" did not mean book-learning in days when there were no books, but only wise ways of doing things, and such knowledge as comes by observation. Some of Solomon's judgments, when his people brought their disputes to him to be settled, have been very noted ever since.* Beside this, Solomon excelled in expressing his thoughts in short and pithy sentences called proverbs, and this art was very much admired in the East. Some of these sayings were collected many years afterwards, with others of the same kind written much later, and called The Proverbs. He seems to have been fond of plants and animals too, and if he had lived many centuries later might have been called a botanist or zoologist.

It was a long time before the Jews ceased talking or writing of the splendor and luxury of Solomon's reign. One of their oldest poems, called the "Song of Solomon," shows something of the feeling towards him. It is a sort of antique drama, and represents a country maiden taken away from her peasant lover and brought into Solomon's harem, from which she afterwards escapes and returns to her home, remaining true to her love. The writer's idea seems to be to contrast the voluptuousness of Solomon's way of life with simple and true affection.

Beside the Temple of Jehovah, Solomon built temples to three other Gods, Chemosh, Molech and Ashtoreth, as well as to many whose

* 1 K. III. 16-28.

names are not given.* Although he worshipped Jehovah as his nation's God, yet he evidently believed there were other Gods too whom it was better not to neglect, and his people were only too willing always to sacrifice to the idols of their neighbors. We must remember that there were very few in those days, if any, who had thought enough on such matters to understand that there can be only one God, and Solomon was not one of those few. Most of the kings who came after him followed his example in this, and the temples which he built to all these strange Gods stood for hundreds of years.

Solomon was the last king over the whole Jewish people. The northern and southern tribes never became one at heart, and were on the point of falling apart more than once while David was king.† When Solomon died, and his son Rehoboam threatened to be even more despotic than his father, the breach grew wider, and the little nation was broken in two. Ten northern tribes chose a king of their own, Jeroboam, built temples containing idols of Jehovah, and formed the kingdom of Israel. This kingdom lasted two hundred and fifty years, had nineteen kings, and then was conquered, and the people carried into slavery by the Assyrians. Two tribes only, those of Judah and Benjamin, accepted Rehoboam as their king, and took the name of the kingdom of Judah. They were much smaller than the other kingdom, but proved stronger and lasted much longer. It is from them that all the Jews now living are descended. Solomon died B. C. 978, so that the Jewish people existed as one nation less than a hundred years.

References.

(*Same as before.*)

Allen's "Hebrew Men and Times;" Gannett's "Chosen Nation" (Less. III., P. 2); Renan's Commentary (and others) on the "Song of Solomon;" Josephus; Antiquities (B. VIII.); Heilprin (II. 7–10.)

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* 1 K. XI. 7, 8; 2 K. XXIII. 13.

† 2 S. XV. 10–12; XIX. 41–43.

LESSON XV.

JOSIAH.

1. How long after Solomon did Josiah live?
2. Over what people was he king?
3. What changes did he make in the Jewish religion?
4. What was the character of the Jewish religion before that time?
5. What led Josiah to make these changes?
6. What was the Book of the Law?
7. What Jewish books had been written before this time?
8. By whom was Josiah conquered?
9. How long did his kingdom last after his death, and how was it destroyed at last?

Texts: 1 K., xix. 12; xx. 11; Ps. xlii. 1, 2, 3, 11; Sam., i. 1, 4.

NOTES.

About the year B. C. 640, a boy named Josiah, only eight years old, was king of Judah, the kingdom of Israel having already perished. When Josiah became of age he found the Temple in great need of repair, and set carpenters and masons to work upon it. While this work was going on, Hilkiah the high priest sent word to the king that a new book, which he called the Book of the Law, and which had strange religious precepts in it, had been found in the Temple. When the king read the book he was greatly excited and alarmed, for in it were laws from Jehovah forbidding all the idolatries and other religious customs which he and the kings before him had practised. Until then the Jews had always been fond of idolatrous rites, and although reforms had once or twice been attempted,* the people and kings had always fallen back at once into their old ways. In Josiah's time the three temples which Solomon had built to heathen Gods were still standing; the sun, moon and stars were all worshipped in Jerusalem as Gods; the horses and chariot of the Sun-god stood in the Temple of Jehovah, together with many other heathen idols and altars and

* 1 K., XV. 9; 2 K. XI. 17; XVIII. 1-4.

strange vessels used for wicked rites, while just outside the city was a valley where little children were regularly sacrificed to the dreadful God Molech.* But the Book of the Law forbade any God to be worshipped but Jehovah, or any idols or images to be used, and directed that sacrifices should be offered only at Jerusalem, and that the priests should all be chosen from one family, the family of Levi.

It was a great change, from all the horrible practices of the past to the worship of one God, but Josiah set about it bravely, and found many ready to support him; so that the heathen temples and altars in and around Jerusalem were soon destroyed, and the unholy images and vessels in Jehovah's temple brought out and burned. This was one of the most important events in Jewish history; for from this time idolatry almost ceased among the Jews, and the worship of one God, or what is called monotheism, began in earnest. To be sure it was seven centuries since Moses had first taught them about Jehovah, and this seems a long time for a nation to be learning to give up its idols and its many Gods; but this only shows how full of idolatry the whole world then was.

What this Book of the Law was, or how it came to be in the Temple, we cannot be sure. Perhaps it was not really found in the Temple, but was written by the high priest himself, or by some other person, to bring about a religious reform, and the priest either did not know this or said nothing about it. Probably it was part of what is now called Deuteronomy, which, in that case, is one of the oldest books in the Old Testament.† Before this time several of the prophecies and some of the psalms were written, and no doubt many stories about the Patriarchs and Moses; but there were no books containing laws, else the king would not have been so much surprised when the Book of the Law was read. Before this the Jews had nothing which could be called a Bible.

But the nation did not last long after this to practice its new religion, for in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign he was defeated in battle by Pharaoh, and the nation became subject to Egypt once more. This was really the end of the Jewish monarchy; for although there were four more kings, they were all vassals of foreign nations, and the kingdom grew weaker all the time. After the Egyptians came the Chaldæans, a strong eastern nation, who conquered both Egypt and Judæa. The Chaldæan king, Nebuchadnezzar, took Jerusalem a few years after Josiah's death, and about twenty years later the city and

* 2 K. XXIII. 4–14.

† Kuenen's "Religion of Israel," II. 9–38.

Temple were entirely destroyed, and most of the inhabitants carried captive to Babylon on the river Euphrates. This was in the year B. C. 586.

References.

(*Same as before.*)

Smith's "Assyrian Discoveries;" Smith's "History of Babylon;" Layard's "Nineveh and Babylon;" Lenormant and Chevallier's Manual; Schnorr, 123, 124; Byron's "Hebrew Melodies."

LESSON XVI.

JEREMIAH.

1. Who was Jeremiah?
2. What do you understand by a Hebrew prophet?
3. Mention any Hebrew prophets whose names you remember.
4. Did they all write books?
5. Tell as much as you can of the life of Jeremiah.
6. Tell something of his way of preaching.
7. What made him so mournful a preacher?
8. How long did he say the exile of his people would last?
9. How long did it last?
10. What is the difference between the word "prophesy" as used then and as used now?

Texts: Jer. vi. 14; viii. 20, 22; xiii. 23; xxxi. 15; Lam. i. 1, 6; Ps. xlii. 1, 5; cxxi. 1; cxxxvii. 1, 3, 4.

NOTES.

One of the leading men at Jerusalem in these trying times was Jeremiah the prophet. It is not easy for us to understand exactly what a Hebrew prophet was; but we must remember that in those early days anyone who seemed wiser or more eloquent than others was sure to be looked upon with great respect, as if he had a special gift from God. At first they were called "men of God," or "seers,"* and were looked upon as magicians, who consulted charms and conversed with spirits; afterwards they were called prophets, and for a long time were the great orators and poets of the nation, and had as much influence as kings or priests. They were the only preachers the Jews then had, and were the first ones to write books or collect accounts of early Jewish history. A few of them wrote their own prophecies in prose or poetry, and these writings are almost the oldest parts of the Old Testament, and certainly the most eloquent and beautiful. They were not all good or wise men, for some made great mistakes or deceived the people on purpose, but many were among the bravest and noblest of the Jews, both in peace and in war. Among the early prophets were

* 1 Sam. IX. 8, 9.

Samuel, Deborah, Nathan, Elijah; among the later, Joel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and several others. Perhaps the greatest of them all was Isaiah, who saved the nation, in a time of great peril, by his courage and his influence with the people and the king.*

Jeremiah lived in the last days of the nation, and tried when it was quite too late to save it from destruction. After Josiah's reform, when all the heathen idols had been removed, it was supposed that the country was safe, but Jeremiah saw how corrupt it still was, and kept on predicting calamity unless the people themselves reformed. He felt so deeply the nation's wickedness and peril that he could talk of nothing else, so that his writings were full of lamentation, and he was as little beloved by the people as men usually are who are constantly talking to us of our faults. Sometimes he stood at the temple-gate and told those who entered that their sacrifices and worship did no good, unless they gave up stealing and cheating, and were kind and just to strangers and widows.† Some of his ways of attracting the people's attention, and forcing his meaning upon them, were very singular. In these days writers often use what is called figures of speech, but in those days, when people read but little, the same figures or illustrations were acted out. Once, for instance, when Jeremiah wished to convince the Jews that Jerusalem must be destroyed, he took a bowl in his hands and threw it violently on the ground, to show that the Lord would shatter the city as he had shattered the bowl. Again, he walked through the streets with a yoke on his neck, to show the people that they themselves were to bear the yoke of slavery. At another time, he placed two baskets of figs in front of the Temple, one full of ripe figs, the other full of rotten ones, explaining that the good figs represented the obedient Jews, the bad ones, those who refused to go into exile with their brethren.‡

Some of his threats or predictions proved quite wrong, as when he said King Jehoiakim would have no successor, while he really had two; § or that all the Jews would finally return to Jerusalem, although but a small portion returned; ‖ or that their exile would last seventy years, when it was really hardly more than fifty.** But his preaching was none the less eloquent or useful because he could not always tell

* 2 K. XIX.
† Jer. VII.
‡ Jer. XIX; XXIV; XXVII.
§ Jer. XXXVI. 30.
‖ Jer. XXXIII. 7.
** Jer. XXV. 11.

beforehand exactly what was to happen, for prophecy in those days meant much more than predicting future events.

Jeremiah had made the king and people so angry by his constant threats and wailings, that he was finally thrown into a dungeon as a traitor. When Jerusalem was captured and destroyed, the conqueror showed him great kindness for having urged the people to submit, and offered to care for him in Babylon; but he preferred to stay behind and share the misfortunes of those who remained in Jerusalem. Afterwards he fled to Egypt with a party of Jewish exiles, and there he is supposed to have died.

Beside the Book of Jeremiah are five very mournful poems called "Lamentations," which he is thought to have written, four of which are something like our acrostics, the verses beginning with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in regular succession.

References.

(*Same as before.*)

Also, Kuenen's "Prophets and Prophecy in Israel;" Bibliotheca Sacra, 1833, p. 361, &c. (article by Tholuck); Noyes's "Prophets," Heilprin II. 62-163; Stanley II. 570, &c.; "Bible for Young;" Milman I. 439-448; Gannett's "Chosen Nation" (Less. III. p. 3); Matthew Arnold's "Great Prophecy of Israel's Restoration;" Mich. Angelo's "Prophets," from Sistine Chapel.

LESSON XVII.

EZRA.

1. To what city were most of the captives carried?
2. What happened to that city afterwards?
3. Why was Cyrus called the Messiah?
4. What favor did he grant the Israelites?
5. What were they called after this?
6. What was done after their return to Jerusalem?
7. Who was Ezra? Who was Nehemiah?
8. Tell something about them.
9. In what books do we read about them?
10. What did Ezra do for the Jewish nation?
11. Who were the Samaritans?

Texts: Ps. cxxvi. 1; cxxvii. 1; cxxxvii. 1, 2, 3, 4; Is. xl. 1, 2, 3; lxi. 1; Haggai ii. 3; Dan. v. 25.

NOTES.

So Jerusalem was destroyed, and most of the inhabitants were scattered. Some fled to Egypt, but a larger number were carried to Babylon as captives. Babylon was a very beautiful city, celebrated throughout the world for its immense walls, broad enough for two chariots to drive upon them side by side, its magnificent temple of Bel, its artificial lakes, and its hanging gardens. The Israelites at first hated their conquerors, and would have nothing to do with them; but as they were well treated and allowed to follow their own customs and their own faith, many of them soon grew very fond of their splendid home, and prepared to live there all their lives. They even fell into their conquerors' ways of life and worship, and received many new ideas from them which afterwards appeared in the Jewish religion. Besides the tales of the early times already spoken of, there are many stories in the Bible which the Israelites must have learned when in Babylon.*

After they had been about fifty years in exile, a new people called the Persians came into power, and under their great king Cyrus subdued all the Eastern nations. The inhabitants of Babylon felt very

* Goldziher's Mythology among the Hebrews, 316–336; Stanley's "Jewish Church," III., Lec. XLI.

safe with their strong walls around them; but one night when their king Belshazzar, with many of his lords, was sitting at a luxurious feast, not thinking of danger, Cyrus turned the water of the river Euphrates into a road-bed which he had dug for it, and entered the city through the dry channel, capturing them all without resistance. The Israelites were very much excited by this, and looked upon it as a punishment to the Chaldæans for destroying Jerusalem. Immediately their prophets began to predict a return from captivity, and promised the people all kinds of splendor and prosperity in Jerusalem again. They thought Cyrus had been sent by Jehovah expressly to set them free, and called him the Lord's anointed or Messiah,* a title which they gave to all their kings. They had been looking long for a new king or Messiah, and were ready to believe that the Persian Cyrus was appointed to deliver them, and that all their sorrows were over.

These bright hopes were not quite fulfilled, for Cyrus did not become their Messiah; but he was really kind to them, and allowed as many as chose to return to Jerusalem, under a governor whom he appointed, and taking with them whatever was still left of the spoils of Solomon's temple. Most of the Israelites by that time had become so much attached to Babylon that they did not wish to return, but some longed to see Jerusalem again and have a temple of their own, and so set out at once. They formed a large caravan of about 40,000 people, and travelled through the desert for four months, before reaching their old home. Many of their most beautiful songs and hymns were written to celebrate this return, and express their great joy on seeing Jerusalem once more.† As most of those who returned belonged to the tribe of Judah, they were all called Jews (Judæans), and this has continued to be their name ever since.

In Jerusalem of course they found everything in ruins, and their first task was to rebuild the temple. It seemed a great undertaking for poor exiles, with enemies about them, but their prophets (Haggai, Zachariah and others) urged them on, and in four years the temple was finished, though in a far less costly and splendid style than before. The descendants of the Jews who had remained in Palestine (afterwards called Samaritans) offered to help them, but were not allowed to do so, and so built a temple of their own on Mt. Gerizim, which the Jews afterwards destroyed. This was the beginning of much hatred between the two races, for the Jews grew more and more jealous of their neighbors as time went on, and would never acknowledge that the Samaritans were the same people with themselves.

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* Is. XLV.

† Stanley's Jewish Church, III. 86.

But the returned exiles found their life at Jerusalem very hard, and became so neglectful of their new temple and its priests, that after seventy or eighty years a second party set out from Babylon, under a learned priest named Ezra, who was resolved to make his countrymen obey the laws of Jehovah. By the help of Nehemiah, a cup-bearer of the king, who followed a few years later, the ruined walls and gates of the city were rebuilt, all opposition from their enemies was overcome, "for the builders every one had his sword girded by his side and so builded," and the people were able to live at last in peace and safety.

Then Ezra began his religious reform. In the first temple the worship had been very much like that in other eastern temples, but Ezra brought new laws and regulations with him, some of which had been written in Babylon, and read these from a wooden pulpit when the people were gathered at a feast. These laws were chiefly about the duties and dresses of the priests, sacrifices and feasts, clean and unclean beasts, keeping the Sabbath and worshipping Jehovah at certain times and places. All these things the people promised strictly to obey, and from this time the Jewish religion became very different from what it had ever been before. The Sabbath began to be strictly observed, the feast of Tabernacles and perhaps the other feasts to be celebrated, and many different kinds of sacrifices to be offered, while the priesthood became a very large and important body. Soon after this, the books of the Bible were collected and regularly read to the people, synagogues were built, and the hymn-book called the Psalms began to be used in the Temple. So you see that it was after the return from the captivity in Babylon that the Jewish church was fully established, and no one had more to do in founding it than Ezra. Ezra lived about B. C. 450. The books which give the account of these events are called the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

References.

(*Same as before.*)

Herodotus, I. 178–191 (Account of Cyrus); Institute Essays, pp. 73–103 (Account of Ezra); Byron's "Hebrew Melodies;" Schnorr, 125–128.

LESSON XVIII.

THE MACCABEES.

1. Who was Alexander the Great?
2. What had he to do with the Jews?
3. After his time to what countries was Judæa subject?
4. Who were the Maccabees?
5. Why did they revolt?
6. When and how long were they in power?
7. Who was Herod the Great, and what can you tell of him?
8. When did the Romans get possession of Jerusalem?
9. What great misfortune came to Jerusalem finally; and when?

Texts: Dan. xii. 3; Ps. xliv. 1; cxviii. 1, 14, 24; lxxiv. 1, 16, 17.

NOTES.

After Ezra's time there is nothing to interest us much in the history of the Jews, for nearly 300 years. They continued subject to Persia until Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, invaded Asia, conquering the whole country as far as India and Egypt, and carrying the Greek language and civilization wherever he went. After his early death,* the countries he had conquered were divided among his generals, and the Jews became subjects of Egypt again for about a century, and then of Syria. Their Egyptian rulers allowed them to keep their own religion, but the Syrian kings tried to force Greek worship and customs upon them. They built gymnasiums in Jerusalem, and introduced Greek games, at which the Jews were greatly shocked.† They stole the treasures from the Temple, burnt the sacred books, bribed the priests, and persecuted cruelly all who refused to give up the worship of Jehovah. The worst of all these Syrian kings was Antiochus Epiphanes, whom the Jews always afterwards mentioned with hatred and horror. He entered the sacred city of Jerusalem with his army, plundered the Temple, and finished by placing on the altar another heathen altar, and commanding the Jews to offer sacrifices upon it. Some of them consented, others resolved to die rather than submit,

* B. C. 323.

† 2 Macc. IV.

and resisted their conquerors with the utmost bravery. One story is told of a mother who saw seven sons killed with cruel tortures before her eyes, and died herself, urging them not to yield. Another is told of an old man of ninety who was beaten to death for refusing to eat swine's flesh which his religion forbade.* At last the whole people rose against their conquerors. Their leader was an aged priest, living in a little town among the hills, who was ordered to offer a heathen sacrifice, but instead of doing so broke the altar to pieces, killed one of his countrymen who was offering sacrifices on it, and fled to the mountains, where he collected a band of brave Jews and defied the tyrant Antiochus. After the death of this priest, his five sons led the revolt, one of whom proved a great general, conquered all the Syrian armies, and at last seized Jerusalem again, and restored the Temple and Jewish worship. His name was Judas; but the people nicknamed him Makkabi, or "the hammer," so that his family were always called the "Makkabees or Maccabees." Judas was one of the noblest heroes in Jewish history, and the whole family were afterwards regarded by the Jews as their deliverers from Syrian tyranny. This war happened about B. C. 150, and the Maccabees were kings and high-priests of the nation for about a hundred years. Their history is given in the "Books of the Maccabees," which are among the most interesting of the Jewish scriptures, although they were written so late that they are not usually given with the rest. The Book of Daniel, and several of the Psalms were written at the same time.

Unfortunately the descendants of this family of Maccabees were not so heroic as their fathers, and by and by began quarrelling among themselves, and were driven from power by rivals who called in the Romans to help them. The first of these was Herod, afterwards called the Great, not really a Jew but an Edomite, and not a very good man, but an able king, who made Jerusalem prosperous, and rebuilt the Temple on a much grander scale than ever before. He had a brilliant reign, and left the kingdom to be divided among his sons.

All this time, however, Judæa was really subject to the Romans, who had made all the other eastern countries provinces of Rome, and only allowed Herod to keep the name of king till it was time to make his kingdom a province also. At last the time came; and Titus, son of one of the emperors, was sent out to capture Jerusalem. The Jews fought as bravely as they had done under the Maccabees, but the city was besieged and taken, the Temple was burned, and the inhabitants were scattered over the earth never to become a nation again. Titus marched into Rome in triumph, bringing the spoils of the city

* 2 Macc. VII.

and Temple with him, and the Jewish nation ceased to exist. This was in the year 70 of a new era of the world's history.

References.

Kuenen's "Religion of Israel," III.; Stanley's "Hist. of Jewish Church" (3d Series); "Hebrew Men and Times;" Gannett's "Chosen People" (Less. III. P. IV. E.); Conder's "Judas Maccabæus" (New Plutarch Series); Helon's "Pilgrimage;" Byron's "Hebrew Melodies;" Photographs of Arch of Titus, and of Raphael's "Heliodorus;" Schnorr, 150–157.

LESSON XIX. *

OLD TESTAMENT.

1. When were the first Jewish books written?
2. Who were the earliest writers?
3. What narratives or histories were there before the time of the Prophets?
4. When did the first collection of religious laws or precepts appear?
5. Tell what books or writings there were before the Captivity.
6. What was written after the Captivity?
7. What had Ezra to do with the Jewish Bible?
8. When did the reading of the Bible in the synagogues begin?
9. What was meant by the Law? the Prophets? the Other Writings?
10. Were these three collections or one?
11. Is the Old Testament one book or many books?

NOTES.

During so many centuries the Jews must of course have written many books. Every nation has what is called a "literature," and the Jews were very rich in this way. Many of their writings were lost, but others are among the oldest and most interesting that are known.

For a long time they had no writings at all, because no one could either read or write. Even after their escape from Egypt, though by that time there were rude forms of writing, on wood or stone, yet so long as the people were wandering about and fighting constantly, no records could very well be made or saved. Many stories were handed down from father to son, and many songs were sung about their strange experiences,† and some laws were certainly put in force before

* Teachers may postpone this lesson to the end, if they prefer, and take it up in connection with that on the New Testament.

† Judges V.

the settlement in Canaan,* but very little got written down, or could have been read if it had been.

At last, about eight hundred years before Christ, after the nation had become somewhat civilized, and there had been kings for two or three centuries, the first Jewish writers appeared, and something like real books began to be written. These books were different enough from ours, as your teachers will explain to you, and were all destroyed long, long ago; but many copies were made from them, and other copies from them, so that we know pretty well what was in them. These first writers were the prophets, whom you have already heard of as preachers, rebuking kings and people when they did wrong, but who were writers as well. Many of them were the best scholars of the time, and not only knew more than others, but were able when they had anything to say to say it in a very eloquent and poetic form. The oldest books that have been saved are probably those containing the writings of Joel, Hosea, Amos and one or two other prophets.

But the prophets did more than write books of their own. They were the earliest Jewish historians, so far as we know. The Jews had always a great many traditions about their ancestors, beginning as far back as Moses or even Abraham. Some of these stories had to do with certain places, like Bethel or Sichem or Jericho; some with certain tribes, such as Judah or Benjamin; some were mere scraps of poetry or song, to be sung in the tents or on the march; some were older even than the Jews themselves, and gave curious accounts of the creation of the world, the first people that lived in it, and the floods that destroyed them. These had been floating about among the various tribes for many, many years, before anyone had thought them important enough to be put into writing or saved. At last the prophets, or the scholars who studied with them, discovered the value of these ancient tales (just as we are beginning now to find out the value of the early accounts of the American colonies), and determined to collect and preserve them, before they were quite lost. Two or three different collections were made in this way, which remained separate for a long time, but after the return from the captivity were put together into one history.†

It was also about the eighth century that the proverbs of Solomon and of other distinguished men were first collected together,‡ and the earliest hymns and songs arranged. You remember that King David,

* Ex. XX. 1–17.

† The so-called Jehovistic and Elohistic documents of the Pentateuch were specimens of these original records.

‡ Prov. X.–XXII; XXV.–XXIX.

who lived long before this, had been very fond of music and poetry, and probably wrote some hymns himself. None of the later kings, except perhaps Solomon,* had the same tastes, but David's influence was not lost, and when in later years the Jewish psalms were collected, his name was given to the book, and many psalms were attributed to him. Some very old poems too which were not at all sacred were preserved with the rest, as you will remember from the account of Ecclesiastes,† and these are quite as interesting in their way as the others. Beside these, some other writings were found by the prophets and preserved, which show that people were asking the same religious questions then as now, and answering them in very much the same way. Such was the Book of Job, in which some unknown writer shows very beautifully that God brings suffering on good and bad alike, and that the wisest and most powerful can do no better than submit to God's higher will. Now-a-days such subjects would be treated in prose, but then almost everything was in poetry, the Book of Job among the rest.

But all this time there was no Bible, so far as we know, that is, no book containing religious precepts or rules for worship. The Jews, as we have seen, served all kinds of Gods, in all sorts of idolatrous ways, and although many attempts were made to put an end to this, the evils still continued.‡ The first writing that could be called a Bible was Josiah's Book of the Law, about B. C. 600, which the priest, as you remember,§ said he had found in the Temple. Whether he really found it or not, or whether it was first written at that time or not, it certainly had not been known before, and was the only sacred book which the Jews had before the captivity.‖ This was probably what is now called Deuteronomy.

How all these writings which I have mentioned were preserved during the exile in Babylon, we cannot tell; but fortunately they were not wholly lost or destroyed, and soon after the return to Jerusalem many others were added to them. Some had been written no doubt in Babylon, others appeared as soon as the Temple was rebuilt, and new orders of priests were established, who needed laws for sacrifices and feasts and Sabbath worship. So much was done by Ezra in the way of collecting all the old writings and adding fresh ones, that the story sprang up that he had re-

* 1 K. IV. 32, 33.

† Less. XIV.

‡ 1 K. XV. 3, 34; 2 K. VIII. 18, 27; XVI. 3; XXI. 3–7, 20–22.

§ Less. XV.

‖ Bible for Young, III. Ch. XXXI.

written the entire Old Testament from memory. No doubt he brought together all that then existed, and perhaps combined the scattered records into such single books as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and the books of Samuel and Kings, all of which appeared about this time. As soon as synagogues were built, these writings were read regularly to the people from Sabbath to Sabbath. Very soon, as singing or chanting became an important part of the Temple service, all the old hymns were collected for temple use, and many new ones added, until the Book of Psalms was finally made, as we find it now. Still later, an account of the return from captivity under Ezra and Nehemiah was written. Also a curious repetition of the history of the Jewish Monarchy; as though some one had felt that the books of Samuel and Kings did not do enough honor to the kings and priests. If you wish to see how differently the same events can be described by different writers, you must compare those older books with the two Books of Chronicles, written about B. C. 250. Not far from this time the book called Ecclesiastes was written; in which the writer represents Solomon as speaking, and declaring that neither riches nor wisdom brought any real happiness, but that life was only vanity and vexation, whether men tried to do well or not. It is not a very religious book, but it shows what people were thinking of in those days, and so is quite as interesting as many which are far better and more instructive. Last of all, about B. C. 160, came the Book of Daniel, a strange writing full of wild predictions, in imitation of the old prophets, which readers now-a-days find it very difficult to understand.

All these books we always see bound together in one volume; but we must remember that it took many centuries to write them all, and that they could not have been brought together until the last was written. In reality several steps were taken, before the Old Testament became one book. First, the five books which stand first in the Bible, were made up from many different sources, about the time of Ezra, and called the "Law of Moses," or "the Law." For a long time this was the only thing read in the synagogues. Then, many years later, the writings of the prophets, including the books of Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, and Kings, which the prophets were supposed to have composed, were collected together and called "the Prophets." Finally, the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and whatever else remained, were put into a third division by themselves, and as there was no particular name to give them, were always called the "other writings."

Beside all these were a number of books, written in the later years of Jewish history, about which there has always been a great dispute. Some Jews thought them as holy and useful as any part of the Old

Testament, as many of them are; but others thought them too modern to be included among the sacred books of the nation, so they are usually placed by themselves. They are called the Apocryphal Books, and you will find them in many of your Bibles between the Old Testament and the New.

You see then that Jewish literature was very full and rich, as I have said. It had in it prose and poetry, history and philosophy, law and prophecy, story and drama and song. And all this the Jews were very proud of, as well they might be, and thought one part quite as sacred as another. When books came to be printed instead of written, all these were put in a single volume; but in old times they were quite separate from each other, and were always spoken of either as distinct books, or as belonging to the "Law," the "Prophets" or the "Other Writings."*

The name Old Testament was not given, of course, until there was another book called the New Testament.

References.

Davidson's Introduction to Old Testament; Bible for Young People (III. 435; IV. 86, 179, 225); Knappert's "Religion of Israel," p. 240; Chadwick's "Bible of To-day;" Sunderland's "What is the Bible?" Gannett's "Growth of a Religion," Less. III., P. III.; P. IV. B. (p. 50), also "Tabular View;" Renan's "Évangiles," Ch. II.; R. P. Stebbins's "Study of the Pentateuch;" De Wette's Introduction to Old Testament; Unitarian Review, Nov. 1880, pp. 421-440; "Selections from the Apocrypha" (Wisdom Series).

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* Matt. V. 17; L. XXIV. 44; Comp. Prologue of Jesus Son of Sirach, B. C. 130; Josephus against Apion I. 8.

LESSON XX.

JESUS.

1. When was Jesus born?
2. Where was he born?
3. Who were his parents?
4. Had he any brothers or sisters?
5. Tell what you know about Nazareth.
6. Who was Herod the Great?
7. What other persons have you heard about who were living while Jesus lived?
8. Where do you find the accounts of his life?
9. In what language were they written?
10. How did it happen that they were not written in the same language which Jesus spoke?

Texts: Matt. ii. 6, 18; L. ii. 1, 10, 14, 32.

NOTES.

Not long after Judæa fell under the power of Rome, while Herod the Great was king, a child was born in Palestine, who, when he grew up, became a great religious teacher and leader. His name was Jesus. In those days, you will remember, there were no family names among the Jews, and people were distinguished from each other in various ways, such as adding the father's name, or the place where they lived. The parents of Jesus were Joseph and Mary, and as there were many other children of the same name with himself, he was called Jesus the carpenter's son, or Jesus of Nazareth.

Nazareth is a beautiful village among the hills of Galilee. It has narrow streets and small bare houses, like those described in an earlier lesson; but vines and fig-trees growing everywhere make it look very attractive, and there is a charming view from the hill-tops of the whole country around. Whether Jesus was born there or only came there afterwards, we cannot tell certainly, for the accounts of his life were written so long after his death that people had very different stories to tell about him. One writer says that his parents lived in Bethlehem, a little village of Judæa, till after his birth, and then went to Nazareth;* another says that they lived in Nazareth, but were on a

* Matt. II. 1, 22, 23.

journey to Bethlehem when the child was born.* But as Nazareth is almost always called his "own country" or native place,† we feel pretty sure that he lived there at any rate from very early days.

It is just as hard to find out exactly when he was born as where, for no one could recall the year or the day of his birth, when the accounts were written, and the writers could only tell his age by guessing about how old he was when he began to preach.‡ Perhaps if they had known at first what he was to become in the world's history, they would have remembered these dates more carefully; but we can never know beforehand what lives are to be useful or great. About three hundred years after Jesus died, Dec. 25 was fixed upon as his birthday, and two hundred years later still the year of his birth was guessed at, so that dates could be reckoned from it, as they have been in certain countries ever since. A. D. 1882, as you know, means eighteen hundred and eighty-two years since Jesus was born; but it is now thought that he was really born a few years longer ago than that.

When it was found, after Jesus' death, how good and holy a life he had led, many wonderful stories began to be told about his birth and infancy. In those days wonderful things were much more easily believed than now, and some unusual events were always supposed to happen when a great man was born. One such story tells us that, on the night of the young child's birth, angels were heard in the heavens singing "peace on earth good will to men,"§ and that the shepherds in the fields listened to the song, and hastened to the manger where the child was born. Another says that magicians from the East were led by a star to the same manger, and brought rich offerings of gold and fragrant gums, and took back with them as a gift from the mother the cloth in which the infant was wrapped.‖

All this shows how much the world learned to honor Jesus after his death; but at the time people little thought what the young peasant child was to become. His father and mother were both village people, and lived a quiet life like all their neighbors. Joseph was a carpenter, and no doubt brought up all his sons to the same trade; and in later years, when Jesus began to preach, he was sometimes taunted for being nothing but a carpenter.** He had several brothers and sisters,

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* L. II. 4. 7.
† Matt. XIII. 54.
‡ L. III. 23.
§ L. II. 13, 14.
‖ Matt. II. 9–11; 1 Gospel of Infancy, III. 1, 2.
** Mark VI. 3.

some of whom are mentioned by name;* so that although so little is known of his early life, we can think of him as growing up in a pleasant and loving home.

Rome had just become an empire when Jesus was born, and had conquered the whole civilized world. Augustus was the first emperor, and had a very splendid reign, bringing about him all the noted writers and the great men of the time. Tiberius was emperor when Jesus died. The language spoken at the Court and in Italy was Latin, but in Asia Greek had been much used since the conquests of Alexander the Great, and was spoken in Judæa, at this time, by educated people, government officers and travellers. The country-people of Judæa, after the captivity, spoke a Syrian dialect, which was about as much like Hebrew as French or Italian is like Latin. This was the language which Jesus always spoke.

All the accounts of Jesus which we have are written, not in Hebrew but in Greek, so that the language cannot be exactly his own words, but only a translation of them. Four of these accounts, called the Four Gospels, have been collected in the New Testament. They are quite short, and were written so long after his death that many things which he said and did had been forgotten, but we are very fortunate in having even so much as this. Three of these, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke were begun abont 40 or 50 years after Jesus died, and contain all that the different writers could gather at that late day from those who had seen Jesus, or had heard his sayings and doings repeated. The fourth, called the Gospel of John, was written much later, and makes Jesus' ministry considerably longer than either of the others. A great deal of what was best worth remembering must have been preserved in this way, and certainly it gives us a very beautiful and noble idea of Jesus' life.

References.

Bible for Young (V. Ch. I., III); Geikie's "Life of Christ:" Farrar's "Life of Christ" and others; Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," II.; Chadwick's "The Man Jesus;" Renan's Illustrated Vie de Jésus, Ch. I., and illustration on p. 9; Milton's Hymn on the Nativity; Dommet's Hymn, "It was the calm and silent night."

* Matt. XIII. 55.

LESSON XXI.

CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

1. How many of the four Gospels tell anything about Jesus' early life?

2. What other books give any account of it?

3. What kind of stories are told about him?

4. How does it happen that we know so little of his childhood?

5. Did he go to school?

6. How much did children learn in those days?

7. Did he ever travel?

8. Tell about one of his visits to Jerusalem and what happened there.

9. What kind of religious services did he attend on the Sabbath?

Texts: L. II. 40, 49, 52.

NOTES.

There were a great many accounts of Jesus' life beside the four Gospels,* but many were lost, and others were considered so improbable, that they were not put into the New Testament, but are always published by themselves and called "apocryphal," or doubtful. Still there are many interesting things in them. One of them called the "Infancy of Jesus Christ," has a great deal more to say about the early life of Jesus than the four Gospels, and tries to show that he was much more wonderful, as a little child, than other children. These are some of the stories it tells: —

Once, when Jesus was seven years old, and was playing with other boys, they all tried to make little birds and animals out of clay. They were quite proud of their success, but to the surprise of the other children, the oxen and asses which Jesus made began to walk, and his sparrows to fly. Often Jesus went with Joseph his father to make gates or pails or boxes; and as Joseph was not a very good carpenter, according to this account, and often got his boards of the wrong size, his little son would make them longer or shorter as was needed, by

* L. I. 1.

simply touching or pulling them. When he was first taken to school, instead of learning his alphabet, he began to question the master about the form and order of the letters, and then astonished him by explaining why Aleph (A) came before Beth (B), and what was the meaning of all the lines and points of the Hebrew characters.

The "apocryphal" Gospels are full of such stories as these, which the writers themselves no doubt thought were true, and which were once believed by all, but which hardly any one believes now, because they seem so improbable and childish. As tales of this kind were told about almost every great or good man in old times after his death, it is not strange that these were told about Jesus; but this should make us all the more careful in distinguishing between the real incidents of his life and the imaginary ones. Fortunately his real life was so beautiful throughout that it does not need any make-believe wonders to improve it.

We cannot help feeling sorry that the early companions or the parents of Jesus could not have known how interesting to us all the little deeds of his childhood would be, and so have kept some record of them. As it is, only one Gospel has anything to say about his childhood, and that tells us almost nothing. The only things we know are, that he lived in Nazareth, that he learned to work at his father's trade, and that he probably went to school with other children, and studied whatever was then taught to Jewish boys. Schools for young children were just beginning about that time. There were no school-houses, and no regular school-masters, but the children went every day to the synagogue, where one of the attendants taught them how to read and write, and to repeat passages from the Scriptures. This was probably all the instruction which Jesus ever received, except what his father may have given him at home about his own people and their history; and as there were no printed books in those days, and only rich people or scholars owned the written ones, he cannot have had many opportunities to read. But this was the education which all young persons received except the few who went to the higher schools at Jerusalem; and when there were so few books no doubt children learned a great deal more from what they saw and heard than they do now.

Like all other Jewish children, Jesus, after he was five years old, went with his parents every Sabbath to the Synagogue, and there heard the Jewish Scriptures and the discourses of the rabbis. If he had lived in Jerusalem, he would have gone often to the Temple, and seen the sacrifices and the incense, and heard the prayers and chantings of the priests; but in Galilee the children knew very little of these things except what their parents told them. Three times a year, however,

there used to be grand processions to Jerusalem to attend the feasts, and these every man was expected to join, and often whole families joined also. The parents of Jesus went in this way every year to the passover, and once, when Jesus was twelve years old, they took him with them. It was probably his first journey, and must have been a very important event in his life to join the long procession of pilgrims, and see for the first time the great city of Jerusalem and its beautiful Temple. He was so much interested and excited by it that when his father and mother started for home he lingered behind, and they had to return after a day's journey and look for him. They found him in the Temple-grounds listening to some of the learned men who were conversing there, and putting questions of his own to them. Some of the accounts say that he explained the Scriptures to them, and surprised them by telling the number and movements of the stars, the bones veins and arteries of the body, and how the soul came to the body and left it.* This is no doubt a very exaggerated account, the real truth being probably that he astonished those who stood around by his intelligent questions and answers; but at any rate the incident was never forgotten, and is almost the only event of his childhood that is given in the four Gospels. More than one great artist has made it the subject of a picture.

References.

Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," II.; Geikie, Farrar, &c.; Greg's "Scenes from the Life of Jesus;" "Bible for Young," V., Ch. VI.; Edersheim's "Jewish Social Life," p. 120; Helon's Pilgrimage; Frothingham's "Child's Book of Religion" (Legends of Virtue); Longfellow's "Golden Legend" (Miracle Play); Illustrated Renan, pp. 8, 17, 33; Eggleston's "Christ in Art" (Bida's Illustrations); Holman Hunt's Picture of "Christ with the Doctors."

* 1 Gospel of the Infancy, Ch. XXI.

LESSON XXII.

BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY.

1. In what condition was Judæa as Jesus grew up?
2. In what condition was the Jewish religion?
3. What reformer appeared at that time?
4. Tell something about his preaching.
5. What connection had Jesus with John the Baptist?
6. When did he leave John, and why?
7. Why did not Jesus return to Nazareth to live?
8. When did he begin his ministry?
9. Point out Nazareth and Capernaum on the map.

Texts: Is. xl. 3; lxi. 1; Matt. iii. 1, 2, 8, 10; iv. 10; L. iv. 24.

NOTES.

As Jesus grew up in Nazareth the country was in a very troubled state. The Roman governors who ruled the land took less and less pains to please the people, and at one time created a great tumult in Jerusalem by bringing into the city military standards or shields with figures of the emperor upon them. The Jews thought such figures idolatrous, and were ready to die rather than allow them in their holy city.* Beside this, the Jewish religion had grown quite formal and heartless, as every religion is apt to do in which there are many ceremonies to observe. Many thought that if they went through the long and splendid service at the Temple, and observed the hundred little precepts which the Scribes laid down for them, it made little difference what lives they led.

While the country was in this unhappy condition, a very singular reformer, named John, appeared, and tried to arouse the people by his preaching. He lived in the wilderness of Judæa, dressed like a wild man in coarse camel's hair garments, and eat nothing but the honey and locusts which he found in the desert. As the people flocked out to see so strange a hermit, he used the severest language with them, told them of their hypocrisy and wickedness, and called on them to repent and prepare for the coming of the "kingdom of heaven," which he said was close "at hand." By this he did not mean at all what we should mean by the kingdom of heaven, but

* Josephus Antiq. XVIII., III. 1.

the Jewish kingdom itself, which the Jews in those days believed Jehovah would re-establish at Jerusalem, driving out the Romans, punishing all the wicked, and making the Jews masters of the whole world. This they called the "kingdom of God" or "heaven," because they considered Jehovah as its king; and John declared that this kingdom was to begin at once, and the people must repent of their sins and so be ready for it. We know now what a mistaken expectation this was, but at that time it was very strong and real. As John baptized all his followers, by making them dip themselves in the river Jordan as if to be cleansed from their sins, he was called John the Baptist. He must have been a very bold and eloquent man, for he stirred the people as no one had done since the days of the old prophets.

Among those who came to him from all parts of the country was Jesus, who left his home at Nazareth to listen to the new preacher. According to one writer,* the mothers of John and of Jesus were related to each other, so that the children must have been always acquainted, but as the other writers do not mention this we cannot be sure of it. Jesus had grown up by this time, though his exact age is uncertain, as one book speaks of him as "about thirty,"† while another says he was "not yet fifty," as though he were nearly that age.‡ However this may have been, he had no doubt often mourned over the evil state of things among his people, and longed to help them. When John the stern prophet appeared, Jesus went into the wilderness to join him, was baptized like all John's followers, and remained as long as John was there, listening to his fiery words, as he preached of the kingdom of heaven that was so soon to come. At one time Jesus spent many days alone in the desert, and passed through such a struggle with himself, that it seemed as if evil spirits were tempting him to give up all thoughts of serving his fellow-men, and devote himself to his own pleasure and good alone. A very striking account of this incident, in which Satan is represented as really appearing and speaking, is given in two of the Gospels.

After a time John, who had given great offence to Herod by his bold words, was thrown into prison, and Jesus then returned to Galilee to carry on his ministry alone. Instead of going back to his home in Nazareth, however, he went to Capernaum to live; a much larger and more central town on Lake Gennesareth, through which ran one of the great highways from the East to the Mediterranean and Egypt.

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* L. I. 36.

† L. III. 23.

‡ J. VIII. 57.

One reason given for his going to Capernaum is that the people of Nazareth, who had always known him as a poor carpenter and son of a carpenter, could not believe that he had anything to say that was worth their hearing. If the wonderful stories of his childhood which were told in the last lesson had been really true, his townspeople would of course have been the very first to believe in his teaching, but as it was they would not listen to him. An interesting story is told in one of the Gospels of his going into the synagogue at Nazareth on the Sabbath, and standing up to speak, as people were allowed to do, after the Scripture reading. Quoting a beautiful passage from one of the Prophets, he told the people that he was sent to them like the old prophet himself, "to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind." Instead of listening, however, the people all rose up angrily, drove him out of the city, and tried to kill him.*

Whether this was his real reason or not, it is certain that he left Nazareth as soon as he began to preach, and lived from that time at Capernaum, where his winning words soon drew many followers around him.

References.

Lives of Jesus; Hausrath's "New Testament Times;" "Bible for Young" (V. Ch. 7, 8, 9, 10); Chadwick's "Man Jesus;" Martineau's "Hours of Thought" (Ser. I.); Illustrated Renan, pp. 48, 52, 57, 61, 69, 80, 84, 141, 145; Longfellow's "Divine Tragedy;" Milton's "Paradise Regained;" Stopford Brooke's "Sermons," Series I.

* L. IV. 16–30.

LESSON XXIII.

MANNER OF HIS PREACHING.

1. What do you understand by a quotation?
2. Give some instance where one writer quotes another?
3. What writers did Jesus sometimes quote?
4. Give some instances of this.
5. What is a parable?
6. In what parts of the world are parables most used?
7. Repeat some parable of Jesus, and say what you think it means.
8. What is the difference between a parable and a fable?
9. What are the Beatitudes?
10. What is the Sermon on the Mount?

Texts: Matt. v. 3–9; 17; 38, 39; 44; vi. 28, 29; xiii. 3–8; 44–46.

NOTES.

When we speak of Jesus as *preaching*, we must remember what a different thing preaching was then from what it is now. There were no regular sermons, or regular preachers, but the Jewish speakers explained the Scriptures in the Synagogue on the Sabbath, or addressed the people in the open air.

In explaining their Scriptures the Jews were very fond of tracing resemblances between what the prophets and other writers had said, and the events which were actually happening, to prove that their prophets had foretold future events. Sometimes they were very ingenious in this, as several passages in the New Testament show.* Jesus also quoted much from the Jewish Scriptures, but often in a very different way from others. Sometimes he wished to show how imperfect the old teaching was, and to give his followers higher ideas of duty and right.† Sometimes his purpose was simply to explain or illustrate what he was saying, just as speakers in these days quote

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* Matt. II. 23; III. 3; IV. 14; XXI. 4, 5; Comp. Is. XI. 1; XL. 3; IX. 1, 2; Zach. IX. 9.

† Matt. V. 21–44.

striking passages of poetry or prose from other writers.* One passage from the old prophets, as we saw in the last lesson, he applied to himself,† others he applied, in the same way, to John the Baptist,‡ as fulfilling certain predictions in the Old Testament. Whether he meant that the predictions were fulfilled in just the way that the prophet meant, or in a different and better way, we cannot tell; but in either case it drew the attention of the people to his teachings and made them remember his words.

But he had other and much more familiar ways of teaching. As he met his followers generally in the open air, he was fond of pointing to the flowers and birds and fields, to show what beautiful lessons they tell of God's love and care.§ Instead of waiting for special times to speak on religious matters, he often took common events, just as they happened, and drew important truths from them.‖ Much of his best teaching was in the form of stories, or what were then called parables. In the East, where all the ways of life are so different from ours, people have always used much more poetic and figurative forms of speech than is common with us. Many images and comparisons which we employ only in poetry they use in common conversation, addressing each other every day in what seems to us very inflated and high-sounding language. All such things as proverbs, apologues, parables and fables, came first from the East. Parables are common incidents, which either have happened or might happen, so told as to teach some lesson or moral. Jesus used this way of teaching more than almost any other, sometimes taking parables which other Jewish teachers had used, sometimes making them himself. Many of them are very beautiful, and were of course understood much better and remembered longer than any moral rules or arguments would have been. When he wished to tell his hearers that they should use whatever powers God had given them, whether little or great, he told them of a rich man going on a journey, and leaving different amounts of money to different servants to trade with while he was away; and how those who had a good deal were very industrious, and those who had little were idle, and had nothing to show when he came back. Perhaps his hearers knew of just such a case as this; at any rate he told the story in such a way no doubt as to make them all feel that the smallest gifts or opportunities were to be used as faithfully as the greatest. Any

* Matt. XIII. 14; XXI. 16; Comp. Is. VI. 9, 10; Ps. VIII. 2.
† L. IV. 18.
‡ Matt. XI. 10, 14; Comp. Malachi III. 1; IV. 5.
§ Matt. VI. 26, 28; X. 29.
‖ Matt. XII. 47; XIX. 13; XX. 20.

fault which he noticed among his followers he was apt to correct in some such way as this, and many of his parables on such occasions have been preserved.* Indeed some of his hearers, when they tried to recall his preaching afterwards, could not remember that he had ever taught except by parables.†

But he did teach in many other ways, some of them even more tender and beautiful than his parables. One series of short sayings, in which he tried to comfort his hearers in their poverty and trial, by telling them that it was not the rich or proud or prosperous who were happiest, but often those who suffer most, are called the "Beatitudes," and have brought more consolation and peace to men's hearts than almost any words that were ever spoken.‡ These sayings were not always understood at the time, as such truths seldom are, and some who heard him evidently thought he was promising them actual food and riches.§ But it is easy for us now to understand what he really meant.

There is nothing in the words of Jesus which we should call a sermon; for he generally spoke wherever he happened to be, whether there were many to hear him or few, and whether there was little to say or much. One of the writers of the New Testament, however, has brought together a number of his sayings, as though they were all spoken at once, when he was standing on a hill-side with his hearers gathered below him.‖ This is always called the "Sermon on the Mount."

References.

"Bible for Young" (V. Ch. X., XI., XII., p. 211); Frothingham's "Stories from the Lips of the Teacher;" Illustrated Renan, pp. 48, 84, 105.

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* Matt. XIII.; Comp. "Bible for Young," V. 181–198.

† Matt. XIII. 34; M. IV. 33, 34.

‡ Matt. V. 1–12.

§ L. VI. 20–26.

‖ Matt. V.–VII.

LESSON XXIV.

JESUS AND THE COMMON PEOPLE.

1. With what class of people did Jesus have most to do?

2. Who were the Publicans?

3. What was meant then by "sinners"?

4. How did Jesus treat such people?

5. How were they usually treated?

6. Mention some of the places and occasions of his preaching.

7. What were some of the subjects that he talked about?

8. Can you tell some anecdote to show how his teaching differed from that of to-day? *

Texts: Is. xlii. 1–3; Matt. vi. 19, 20, 24; xix. 14; L. vi. 41, 42, 43.

NOTES.

Jesus lived all his life among the common people of the towns and villages of Galilee. The inhabitants of Judæa, and especially of Jerusalem, looked down upon the Galilæans as ignorant country people, and ridiculed their pronunciation and rustic ways; but they were honest and industrious enough, and were none the worse for their simple manners. As Capernaum was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, many of the early followers of Jesus were fishermen. In Chorazin and Bethsaida, too, little villages which he often visited, the people must have been chiefly fishermen. No matter how poor or ignorant they were, Jesus was quite content to be among them, and gave some of his finest precepts in answer to their questions.

Indeed, he did not avoid even those whom the rest of the nation despised as outcasts. Among these were certain persons who had been turned out of the synagogues for some fault or other, and who were called "sinners." The Jews hated these sinners, and treated them always as if they were unclean, and unfit to enter their houses or sit at their tables. Still more hateful to them were the *publicans*, or those who collected taxes of their fellow-countrymen to support

* Matt. XVIII. 1–3; L. XXI. 1–3; VII. 36, or some other of the kind.

their Roman masters. These publicans, whatever their motives, the Jews denounced as traitors, cast them out of the synagogues, forbade them to make wills, and insulted them in every possible way.

No doubt many of these publicans and sinners were really very low or avaricious men, as they were considered; but Jesus looked upon them all as brethren, and the more others despised them, the more anxious he was to help them. Once he shocked all his friends, and enraged his enemies, by inviting one of these publicans, named Matthew or Levi, to his own house, and eating with him at the table.* Nothing could have lowered him more in the eyes of his countrymen, who showed their contempt by calling Jesus the "friend of publicans and sinners." Little did he mind their taunts, however; and soon the outcast and degraded of every kind found that in him they had a true friend. It was touching to see how many ways they took of showing their gratitude and reverence. Once, when he was at table in a Pharisee's house, a woman whom he had saved from evil habits, pushed her way into the house, and kissed his feet as he lay upon the couch, pouring ointment over them, and wiping them with her hair.†

In this way Jesus won the confidence of the people wherever he went. He joined in all their pursuits, went to their feasts and marriages,‡ lived in their families,§ and was with them at their work. They learned to bring all their troubles and disputes to him,‖ were rebuked by him for their faults,** and were made to feel ashamed of whatever was mean in their own conduct, and to admire what was beautiful in others.†† He was very tender and loving, too, with little children, drew them to him by his kindness, and loved to talk about their purity and innocence.‡‡

All this is very different, as I have said, from the way in which preachers live or speak to-day. It made but little difference to him where he was, or who were with him when he spoke. Sometimes it was in his own house or at a friend's table, sometimes as he strolled with his companions through the fields, sometimes as he stood on the hill-side or on the shore, or in a ship,§§ sometimes from the desk in

* Matt. IX. 9–11.
† L. VII. 37, 38.
‡ L. V. 29; J. II. 1, 2.
§ L. X. 38; XIX. 5.
‖ L. XII. 13; IX. 46, 47; Matt. XVIII. 21.
** Matt. VI. 19, 24, 28; VII. 3–5.
†† Matt. VI. 2, 5; L. XVIII. 10–14; XXI. 1–3.
‡‡ Matt. XVIII. 2, 3; XIX. 13, 14.
§§ Mark II. 1, 2; L. XIV. 1–35; Matt. XII. 1–8; V. 1; XIII. 1, 2.

the synagogues.* In this way he became known and loved in Capernaum, and through many of the towns and villages of Galilee.

REFERENCES.

Edersheim's "Social Life" (Ch. IV.); "Bible for Young" (V. Ch., XV. XX.); Chadwick's "Man Jesus" (Ch. II.); Whittier's "Christ and the Little Ones ("The Master has come over Jordan"); Illustrated Renan, pp. 84, 105, 115, 120, 124, 128, 137, 201, 205.

* Matt. IV. 23; IX. 35; XIII. 54.

LESSON XXV.

COMPANIONS OF JESUS.

1. What homes did Jesus visit in Capernaum?
2. Do you think he had any home there of his own?
3. What is meant by his "disciples?"
4. Give the names of some of them.
5. What can you tell about Peter?
6. What about John?
7. Tell what you know of any of the others?
8. How much were they with Jesus?
9. What had they to do in recording his teachings?

Texts: Matt. x. 38, 39; viii. 20; xx. 26, 27; Mark viii. 36, 37.

NOTES.

In going to Capernaum, Jesus had of course left his friends and home at Nazareth behind him. As he went so much from place to place, perhaps he had no regular abode afterwards, though once or twice the Gospels speak of his house at Capernaum.* But he found new homes open to him there, and drew many friends about him, who loved to be with him and hear his words. Among these were two brothers, both fishermen, named Simon and Andrew. Andrew had been a disciple of John the Baptist, according to one account,† and so had perhaps known Jesus before; Simon was married, and Jesus became a frequent visitor at his house, where several interesting events took place.‡ He visited also the family of Zebedee, a fisherman and man of means,§ whose two sons, James and John, with their mother, not only received Jesus at their house, but went with him when he left Capernaum, and were with him so long as he lived.‖

Among these friends were twelve who became more intimate with him than any others, and called themselves his disciples or scholars. Sometimes they were called the "Apostles," or "those who were sent out," but this was probably after Jesus' death. These twelve seemed

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* Mark II. 1.
† J. I. 35, 40.
‡ Matt. VIII. 14.
§ Mark I. 20.
‖ Matt. XXVII. 56,

to have staid with Jesus all the time, except when he sent them to teach others, and they probably lived under the same roof with him, as one family. No doubt it was through them that most of his sayings and doings were afterwards reported, though no record was made at the time, and Jesus gave them no directions about writing anything down. Some of these disciples were naturally more attached to him than others, but there was no difference of rank or position among them, and Jesus always checked them when they tried to claim superiority over each other, or to ask him, as they sometimes did, to give them places of honor when he was raised to power among the Jews.*

Among these twelve the one of whom we hear most was Simon, an impulsive ardent man, who was very devoted to Jesus, and eager to take part with him in everything, although his courage was apt to fail him when the real danger came. Jesus was very fond of Simon, and saw, as he thought, such strong traits of character in him, that he called him a "rock," or "Peter," and this afterwards took the place of his real name. Andrew his brother was also one of the twelve, but we know nothing about him. Next to Peter, the leading disciples were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, whom Jesus called "Boanerges," or sons of thunder, because of their fiery and passionate natures.† Once, when they all wished to pass through a little village, and the inhabitants for some reason would not allow them to, these brothers proposed to call fire from heaven to burn the village, but Jesus rebuked their violence.‡ At another time they begged him to promise them the two chief offices in his kingdom, as though they expected him to be an earthly monarch, with a palace and throne.§ This showed that they did not wholly understand his character or teachings, but he was strongly attached to them, and is thought to have loved John more than any of his other followers. One of the Gospels speaks of the "disciple whom Jesus loved,"‖ and this is generally supposed to mean John. Another disciple was Matthew, who belonged to the class of publicans whom the Jews hated so bitterly. Perhaps he collected customs on the great highway from Damascus to the Mediterranean which ran near Capernaum.** Beside these was another Simon, called the Zealot,†† who probably had belonged to a party among the Jews who were

* Matt. XX. 25, 26; L. XXII. 24–26.
† Mark III. 17.
‡ L. IX. 54.
§ Mark X. 35–37.
‖ J. XIII. 23.
** Matt. IX. 9.
†† L. VI. 15.

so zealous for their country that they resisted the taxes which the Romans demanded of them. Still another was Judas, who came from a little village in the south part of Palestine called Kariot, and so was named Judas Is-Kariot.* How he came to join the disciples we cannot tell, as all the others were Galileans; but he was trusted with the money on which Jesus and his followers lived, and proved in the end dishonest and faithless. Beside these seven were Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Lebbæus, and another James, about all of whom we know hardly anything. These are usually considered the twelve, but either there was some mistake about their names, or else different men belonged at different times, as another Judas is somewhere mentioned,† and also a Nathaniel,‡ as if they were also disciples.

These were the most intimate friends that Jesus ever had, and most of them were with him through all his ministry. They could not always understand his words, as we have seen,§ and when he spoke of the "kingdom of heaven" were apt, like all the other Jews, to think of an earthly empire, with Jesus as its monarch and Jerusalem as its royal city; but they were none the less faithful or loyal for this, and felt the goodness and greatness of their leader, if they did not know all that he meant. He called on them to make great sacrifices, and to give up everything, as he had done, and to expect all kinds of persecution and suffering, if they joined him,‖ but they followed him nevertheless, and went through many of his hardest trials with him. After his death, they recalled his words, and saw more plainly what his meaning was.**

REFERENCES.

"Bible for Young" (V. Ch. XIV.); Keim's "Jesus of Nazara" (III. 250–281); "The Jesus of History" (Book II.); Furness's "Jesus and his Biographers;" Furness's "Jesus;" Hase's "Life of Jesus;" Renan's "Vie de Jésus" (Ch. VIII.); also illustrations on pp. 93, 124, 137.

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* Man of Kariot.

† L. VI. 16; Acts I. 13.

‡ J. I. 45–51; XXI. 2.

§ Matt. XVIII. 1-3, 21; XX. 21; Mark IV. 10; L. IX. 45; J. XII. 16.

‖ Matt. V. 11; X. 16–22; VIII. 19–22.

** J. XII. 16.

LESSON XXVI.

WORKS OF HEALING.

1. How did the Jewish idea of disease differ from ours?
2. How did they expect sickness to be healed?
3. Had they as many physicians as we, and if not, why?
4. What was meant by "possessed"?
5. What were some of the ways of driving out spirits?
6. Who were brought to Jesus?
7. What power had he over sickness?
8. What idea of his character does this give?

Texts: Matt. viii. 17; xii. 43; J. iv. 48.

NOTES.

Beside being a preacher, Jesus had a very fine and strong influence over those about him, so that they learned to come to him with all their sorrows and cares. They even brought the sick to him to be healed. This seems to us very strange at first; but we must remember that the Jews had quite different ideas about sickness from ours to-day, and that neither people nor doctors had much knowledge of diseases. Instead of supposing, as we do, that sickness came from exposure or over-work or other natural causes, they thought it a punishment from God for some sin which the person himself or his parents had committed.* Some sicknesses they thought were caused by evil spirits. When any one was deaf or dumb or insane, or subject to convulsions or fits, they imagined that some demon had taken possession of his body, and was making him tear and bruise himself, or shout and rave. Instead of speaking of such people, as we do, as insane or mad or epileptic, they called them "possessed." †

Such diseases were to be cured, as the Jews thought, not by giving medicine, but by driving out the demons; and a certain class of men were supposed to have the power of doing this. They were called exorcists, and the Jews went to them, instead of going to doctors. These exorcists had various ways of expelling demons, or pretending

* J. IX. 2.

† Mark V. 2-5; L. VIII. 29; IX. 39.

to do so; sometimes it was by playing the harp or other musical instrument, sometimes by speaking magical words, just as in your fairy stories; sometimes by using certain roots or herbs which had magical properties. Some of these methods were thought to have been practised since the time of Solomon.* These were all superstitions of course, and in many countries books had been written against them, and they had been given up before the time of Jesus; but in the East they continued still, and have lasted till our own times.

In the days of which we are speaking, these magicians were very numerous, and Jesus sometimes speaks as if everyone believed in them.† When it was found how great and good he was, it was supposed at once that he would be able to heal diseases, and sick people from all parts of Galilee, lunatic and deaf and palsied, were brought to him for him to put his hands on them. He was very unwilling to do anything of this kind, not wishing to encourage such superstitions, perhaps, or else preferring that his followers should come to him from higher motives.‡ But the sight of their suffering evidently touched his pity, and whenever he found that he could help them he was eager to do so.

Everyone knows that it is not medicine alone that cures sickness, but anything that soothes the nerves or acts upon the mind. Some people carry repose and strength into a sick-room, and make the sick person better, whenever they enter. In hospitals, too, some doctors have great control over the insane simply by their voice or manner. We can easily imagine that Jesus, with all his purity and strength of character, would possess this power in the highest degree; and many things prove that he had singular influence over the sick. It is strange how eager they were to see him, or hear his voice, or even to touch his garments.§ As they came into his gentle presence, new life came to them, and fresh peace and hope. At his voice those who fancied themselves possessed of demons felt the spirits fly, and their natural power return. Their own imagination helped them much no doubt, but his touch or glance helped them more; and many who had tried other cures in vain, went away from his presence healed. Sometimes his disciples attempted to do the same things, with but poor success,‖ although Jesus assured them that he had no power which they and

* Josephus' Antiquities, VI. 8. 2; VIII. 2, 5.
† Matt. XII. 27.
‡ Matt. IX. 30; XII. 39; XIII. 58; J. IV. 48.
§ Matt. IX. 21; Mark VI. 56; VIII. 22; L. XVIII. 15.
‖ Matt. XVII. 16.

others did not also possess.* But he exercised an influence over both sick and well which none of his followers could equal.

Of course these wonderful acts of Jesus began at once to be talked about, and after his death were greatly exaggerated, as all such reports are, until it came to be believed that he could do any marvellous thing which he chose. You will remember what strange things were told of him in the Apocryphal Gospels, and some of the same tales found their way into the New Testament itself, where he is sometimes represented as quieting storms, multiplying a few loaves into a great many, and walking upon the sea. But Jesus himself never encouraged these reports, and had no desire to be remembered as a worker of miracles, or to have his good deeds magnified. Whatever power goes with goodness and greatness certainly belonged to him, and he could not help using it; but he preferred that people should come to him for the sake of their souls rather than their bodies, and only cared to make them better, and teach them higher ideas of God.

REFERENCES.

Keim's "Jesus of Nazara" (III. 152–249); Josephus' "Jewish War" (VII. 6, 3); "Bible for Young" (V. 166–176); Meyer's Commentaries on above passages; Hase's "Life of Jesus" (96–100); Schenkel's "haracter of Jesus;" Edersheim's "Social Life of Jews" (Ch. X.); Manchester Manual (Vol. II. No. I., pp. 97, 100, 134–141); Renan's "Vie de Jésus" (Illus. pp. 176, 180.)

* Matt. X. 8; XVII. 20; XII. 27; J. XIV. 12.

LESSON XXVII.

JESUS THE CHRIST.

1. What is the meaning of the word Christ?

2. What is the difference between Christ and Messiah?

3. What did the Jews understand by the "Kingdom of heaven"?

4. Why was Jesus sometimes called Christ?

5. Was he the kind of Messiah the people were expecting?

6. In what sense was he a Messiah?

7. Do you think he had any desire to be a king or ruler?

Texts: Is. ix. 6; xi. 1; xl. 1, 2; Matt. iv. 17; v. 3; xiii. 33, 44; L. xvii. 21.

NOTES.

We have seen how the people reverenced Jesus as a great and good teacher. But they thought him something more than a teacher. For a great while the Jews had been expecting their kingdom to be restored, and a new king to appear as powerful as any before. Their Scriptures, as they thought, promised them that the kingdom at Jerusalem should last forever, and that the family of David should always rule them.* They could not believe that such promises would be broken. So they bore all their defeats patiently, and still expected the new king to appear. They spoke of him always as the "Messiah," or "anointed," because the Jewish kings were always anointed with oil on taking office. "Messiah" is a Hebrew word, but when the Greek language began to be used he was called the "Christ," which is the Greek word for the same thing.

As time went on, the imagination of the Jews became more and more excited about this Messiah, and they dreamed of many wonderful things that would happen when he came. They thought he would conquer all their enemies, and bring back to Jerusalem all the Jewish exiles; that war and crime would cease forever; that the new kingdom would be the most splendid the world had ever seen, and all

* Ez. XXVIII. 25, 26; XXXVII. 25; Dan. II. 44; VII. 14.

who lived in it would have long lives, without any sickness or suffering. This kingdom they called "the kingdom of God," or "of heaven." Several persons had appeared from time to time, pretending to be this Messiah, and had caused the same sort of excitement that was felt in this country a few years ago, when people thought the world was coming to an end.

When Jesus began to preach and attract so much attention in Galilee, every one asked at once whether this might not be the expected Messiah. There were all sorts of strange ideas about him. Some thought that John the Baptist had come back to life again, after being killed; some thought that one of the old prophets had returned to earth, to announce that the Messiah was coming;* but many believed that Jesus was really the Messiah himself, and would soon declare himself king of the Jews. At one time the people seized him, and tried to force him to be king.† Some began to study into his family history, to see if he was not descended from David, as every Jewish king should be. Two of the lists which were made out for this purpose, still remain,‡ quite different from each other, but both written to show that Joseph, the father of Jesus, was one of David's direct descendants. Others brought together all the passages of the Old Testament which describe the coming of a great deliverer, and applied them to Jesus, although they had been meant for some one living at the time they were written.

So Jesus came to be called the Messiah or Christ, and his disciples as well as others expected him to become the ruler of an earthly kingdom which would last forever. Jesus himself had no such purpose as this, and tried hard to show his disciples that there was another and higher kind of heavenly kingdom than they were looking for.§ But at the same time he allowed himself to be called the Christ, because he saw how eagerly the people were hoping for a deliverer, and he knew that he could help them in a much better way than they thought. It was a very brave thing to do, for he knew that it would set both Jews and Romans against him, and perhaps cause his death, as it did. But he was resolved to establish a kingdom which should be really "heavenly;" that is, in which virtue and truth should reign. He told his followers to expect not an outward kingdom but an inward one;‖ not

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* Matt. XVI. 13, 14.
† J. VI. 15.
‡ Matt. I. 1–16; L. III. 23–38.
§ Mark X. 35–40.
‖ L. XVII. 21.

one for the powerful, but one for the humble and meek;* and one which should spread through the world, not by conquests, but as the leaven in the meal, or the little seed growing into a great tree.† Many of his parables were to give his disciples more spiritual ideas about the heavenly kingdom which he was to found, though they were not always understood at the time.

Exactly what Jesus himself meant by the "kingdom of God," or by the name "Christ," we cannot be sure, as all the ideas of that age were so unlike ours, and as those who heard his words so seldom understood them. But we can see that he meant something very noble and beautiful, and we know that he gave the name Messiah a far higher sense than it had ever had before. For us in these days, it does not increase our respect or reverence for him to call him the "Christ"; but in those times people looked up to him much more for having that name.

References.

Keim's "Jesus of Nazara" (III. 48); Allen's "Hebrew Men and Times" (p. 379); "Bible for Young" (V. 398); "The Jesus of History" (p. 253); Hase's "Life of Jesus;" Edersheim's "Social Life" (Ch. V.); Renan's "Vie de Jésus" (Ch. XVII.); Montgomery's Hymn, "Hail to the Lord's Anointed."

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* Matt. V. 3, 5.

† Matt. XIII. 31, 33.

LESSON XXVIII.

THE NEW RELIGION.

1. Who did Jesus say would belong to the kingdom of heaven?
2. How did the teachings of Jesus about worship differ from the Jewish customs?
3. What new doctrine about prayer did he teach?
4. About the Sabbath?
5. How do you understand Mark II. 27?
6. How explain Matt. V. 38, 39?
7. Explain Matt. VI. 17, 18.
8. What new ideas of God did he teach?
9. Repeat some verse in which he calls God his father?

Texts: Matt. v. 23, 24; vi. 6; viii. 11; Mark ii. 18; J. iv. 24.

NOTES.

Now let us see what new things Jesus taught. Although he was a Jew, and for the most of his life worshipped and believed like other Jews, yet he thought many of their practices quite false, and had much purer and higher doctrines to teach than any which their Scriptures contained.

For one thing, the Jews believed that God cared more for them than for any other nation in the world, and that when the kingdom of heaven was established they should be the only ones admitted to it. But Jesus told them that only the holy and good would enter that kingdom, whether they were Jews or not, and that many whom they despised were more likely to go in than they.*

Then their Scriptures taught them that the true way to worship God was with outward ceremonies and priests and sacrifices, and that they could atone for their sins by making some offering at the altar. Several Old Testament books are quite full of directions about different sorts of sacrifices, and the dresses and duties of the priests; and most of the Jews thought it more important to wash their hands before eating, and to avoid certain kinds of food than to be honest or forgiving. Jesus, however, had nothing to say about priests or sacrifices,

* Matt. V. 3, 8; VIII. 11; XXI. 31.

but told them it was much more important to forgive a friend after quarreling with him, than to carry gifts to the altar, and that the words which came out of the mouth were more important than the food which went in.* To show them that being a Jew or a priest did not necessarily make a man good, he told them a story of a man, robbed and beaten by thieves, who was taken care of by a hated Samaritan, while a priest and temple-attendant went by without noticing him.†

Beside this, when the Jews prayed they went to the Temple or synagogue and repeated certain regular words, or had the priests repeat them. This was their only idea of prayer. It was thought very important to stand in a certain attitude, face a certain way, and pray at certain hours. Many liked to pray in the streets, that men might see them, and thought the longer and louder the prayers were the better. To Jesus all this seemed very formal and hypocritical, and he reminded his disciples that to repeat prayers over and over again was a heathen practice; and he made them feel that God was just as likely to hear a silent prayer in their own homes, as a public one in the synagogue or street.‡

The Jewish Scriptures also taught them to keep Saturday (the Sabbath) very strictly. No one was allowed to work on that day, or to walk more than a certain distance, or even to let horses or cattle work. A man had once been stoned to death for gathering sticks on Saturday.§ These rules Jesus refused to obey, and took every opportunity to show that whatever was right on other days was right on the Sabbath. He did many things himself on that day which others thought wicked, and which were certainly against the Jewish Scriptures, and when fault was found with him, said that the Sabbath was to make man holy, not man to make the Sabbath holy.‖

Another Jewish law was that when a man was injured by another he should inflict the same injury in return, even if it were the loss of an eye or a tooth;** but Jesus taught his followers to return, not evil for evil, but good for evil.†† Another duty which the Scriptures enjoined was that of fasting; but this, too, Jesus neglected, telling his

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* Matt. V. 23, 24; XV. 2, 11.
† L. X. 30–35.
‡ Matt. VI. 5–8.
§ Num. XV. 32–36.
‖ Matt. XII. 1–5; 10–13; Mark II. 27.
** Lev. XXIV. 19, 20.
†† Matt. V. 38, 39.

disciples that it was much more important to be pure of heart in God's sight than to fast and put on sad faces before men.*

Beside all this, the Jews, as we have seen, had always thought that Jehovah was to be found only in the Temple at Jerusalem; that they must go there, or else look towards the Temple whenever they wished to worship him. Some of their teachers had tried before to correct this childish idea of God, but without success, and Jesus found them still holding it. None of his words are more beautiful than those in which he tells them that God is a spirit, not present in his Temple or at Jerusalem as a man would be, but to be found everywhere, and to be worshipped just as well inwardly and silently, as with forms or words.† No words are oftener quoted than these, though I am afraid it will be a long time yet before they are really understood or obeyed.

Some of the old Hebrew poets had spoken of God as a father,‡ but every one had understood the words figuratively, until Jesus took them literally, declaring that he was himself the child or son of God, and that all his followers were also children of a heavenly father. This language the Jews thought very blasphemous, for they did not think any one had a right to call himself really the child of God;§ but Jesus continued to teach this truth nevertheless; and it would be hard for us now to think of God in any other way than as a Father.

All this offended the Pharisees, or stricter Jews, very much, and made them his bitter enemies. They thought these new doctrines were an attack upon their religion, and tried to silence him. After a while they succeeded, as we shall see; but not until the new truths had been planted in so many hearts that they could never be forgotten, so that they became in the end a new religion, quite different from Judaism.

References.

"Bible for Young" (XVI., XVII., XXIV.); Kuenen's "Religion of Israel" (III. 277); "The Jesus of History" (Book II. Ch. V.); Lives of Jesus; "Rabbi Jeshua;" Illustrated Renan, p. 192; Whittier's Hymn, "O Love! O Life! our faith and sight."

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* Matt. VI. 16–18; XI. 19; IX. 14.

† John IV. 24.

‡ Ps. CIII. 13.

§ J. X. 30–33.

LESSON XXIX.

CHARACTER OF JESUS.

1. Can we tell how Jesus looked?
2. How can we form our idea of him?
3. Mention some noble or generous thing that he did?
4. What seems to you the finest trait of his character?
5. What was his feeling about God?
6. Did people worship Jesus?
7. Did they think him a different sort of being from themselves?
8. Do you think he wanted them to worship him?
9. Do you think he supposed God any nearer to him than to others?
10. If I should call Jesus holy or divine, what should you think I meant?

Texts: Matt. xxiii. 5, 23, 27, 11; L. xx. 25.

NOTES.

From such short accounts as the four Gospels give, it is impossible for us to know as much about Jesus as is known of many distinguished men who lived at the same time. There are statues and busts of such persons as Augustus and Tiberius and Cicero, so that we can tell how they looked, and there are very full accounts of their daily life, so that we can imagine just how they lived. But no one thought of making a statue or bust of Jesus, or even of describing his appearance. There is one account of him, to be sure, which was said to have been written by a Roman governor of Judæa who saw him, and tells us the color of his hair and eyes, and the expression of his face; but it was really written three hundred years or more after his death, and so cannot be trusted.* There are also some very old frescoes on the walls of the Roman catacombs which were once thought real portraits of Jesus, as the early Christians used to worship in the catacombs; but these too were painted long after he died, and only show how in

* Mrs. Jameson's Hist. of our Lord, I. 33, 39–51.

those days they thought he looked.* It was said too that the emperor Tiberius had a head of Jesus cut in an emerald, and engravings from this are often shown now. The head is very interesting, and we should be glad to believe the story about it, but unfortunately there is no proof that it is true.

But though the Bible gives no description of him, we can form an idea of him from all that he said and did, and can see how beautiful his spirit was. From the moment when he first went to hear John the Baptist preach, he gave up all the pleasures of home, and exposed himself to every possible danger, that he might teach his countrymen the new truth that had come to him. We have seen what struggles he passed through in beginning his ministry,† but no peril or discomfort, or persecution ever made him hesitate in his work.

He showed his true character in refusing to be made a leader or ruler, as the people and even his disciples expected, and in saying that his kingdom was not of this world. The only authority he sought was the power he gained over others through their confidence and love, and this grew constantly stronger, and has not yet ceased. His disciples had such faith in his goodness and power that they thought nothing too difficult for him to do, and were constantly expecting him to perform some wonderful work. They believed he could heal all kinds of diseases, could calm tempests, and could even bring the dead back to life again.

That he could be severe with wrong-doers as well as gentle and loving towards his friends, his treatment of the money-changers in the Temple proves,‡ as well as his language toward many of the Jews whom he considered formal and hypocritical.§ The more sincere and true he was himself, the more he felt any insincerity or baseness in others. But his life, for the most part, was peaceful and quiet, and he repaid all violence with forgiveness and love.

The source of all his greatness was his religious nature. Others were satisfied if they went through certain religious forms, but he was content only if his soul was full of faith and devotion. Others thought of God, for the most part, as far away from the earth, and as having nothing in common with man; Jesus felt that God was his father, and made others feel so too. He used the strongest possible language to express this feeling about God; not only calling himself the Son of

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* Heaton's "Concise History of Painting."

† Luke. XXII.

‡ Matt. XXI. 12, 13.

§ Matt. VI. 2, 5, 7, 16; XV. 3-9; XXIII. 1-33.

God, but saying that he was in God and God in him, and that he and the Father were one. Such faith in God and in man had seldom been seen before, and this made him the greatest religious teacher the world had known.

In later times, men thought that one who had done and said such wonderful things must have been more than a man; so they called him a God and worshipped him. But his disciples did not worship him, and no one while he was living ever called him God, nor would he allow others even to call him good.* He was quite content if his disciples loved him and followed him, and would much rather have them trust him than worship him. He never claimed to be of a different nature from those around him;† but he proved to the world how holy a human soul and human life could be made.

REFERENCES.

The Four Gospels; Schenkel's "Character of Jesus;" Ecce Homo; Clarke's "Legend of Thomas Didymus;" Chadwick's "Man Jesus;" Illustrated Renan, pp. 159, 164, 216; Titian's "Tribute Money;" Photographs from the Catacombs.

* Matt. XIX. 17.

† J. XVII. 21–23.

LESSON XXX.

OPPOSITION TO JESUS.

1. Were any of Jesus' own family among his followers?

2. What do you think was the reason?

3. Who were his enemies?

4. Why did the Pharisees oppose him?

5. Did Jesus break any precepts of the Jewish Scriptures?

6. Mention some occasion which set the Pharisees against him.

7. How did the Romans feel towards him?

8. Where did most of his followers come from?

Texts: Matt. xii. 50; xxiii. 24; Mark iii. 21.

NOTES.

Let us see what the Jews thought of this new teacher, so different from any they had known before. In Nazareth, as we have seen, the people would not listen to him at all, but drove him out of the city with great violence.* They evidently felt that one whom they had known as a child, and had seen at work with his father, could have nothing to teach to them, and ought therefore to be silenced.† What was harder still for him to bear was that his own family did not understand him, and could not believe in him.‡ None of his brothers or sisters are mentioned among those who followed him, and we never hear of their being with him or helping him. Instead of appreciating his high purposes and noble thoughts, they seem to have felt that he was beside himself to live as he did; and so followed him to Capernaum, hoping to seize him and lead him back to his home, and his old life again.§ We can imagine how this must have saddened him, and how important he must have felt his work to be, to have done without the sympathy of those who loved him best.

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* L. IV. 28, 29.

† Mark VI. 2, 3.

‡ J. VII. 5.

§ Mark III. 20, 21, 31–35.

The common people among the Jews, especially in Galilee, were very eager to hear him, and believed him a great prophet. They even thought him the Messiah whom they were expecting. The Pharisees, on the other hand, and all the leading Jews at Jerusalem, looked upon Jesus as one who was breaking many of their laws, disregarding their Scriptures, and leading the people into error and rebellion. He kept company with outcasts, he refused to observe the Sabbath, he denounced their long prayers and greetings in the market place, he accused those whom the people honored of hypocrisy and pride, and seemed to them in every way a dangerous person.*

The Romans, who governed the country, hardly noticed the Galilean preacher at all, not thinking him worthy of their attention. The little province of Judæa seemed to them so insignificant, and the Jewish people so few and unimportant, that a religious excitement in Galilee gave them little anxiety. Hardly any one in Rome heard of Jesus, or knew of his existence, or dreamed that the name of an obscure Jew could ever become celebrated in the world.

So it happened that hardly any but the people of Galilee followed Jesus, and he soon found that his worst enemies were among his fellow-countrymen whom he was trying to help, and that their hatred was increasing every day. This made his ministry a very short one, as we shall see, but did not alter his determination or lessen his courage or his faith.

References.

Lives of Jesus; Bible for Young, V. Ch. XVIII., XIX., XX; Ecce Homo; Illustrated Renan, p. 224.

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* Matt. XXIII.; L. XVIII. 10–14.

LESSON XXXI.

JESUS IN JERUSALEM.

1. What was the entire length of Jesus' ministry, according to three of the Gospels?

2. How long did he preach in Jerusalem?

3. How was it according to the Fourth Gospel?

4. Which do you think the more probable?

5. Does it seem to you strange that there should be this difference?

6. How was Jesus received in Galilee, and how in Jerusalem?

7. Mention some event that happened in Jerusalem?

8. What dangers did Jesus find himself while there?

Texts: Matt. xxi. 42; xxii. 37, 38, 39; xxiii. 26.

NOTES.

Jesus probably preached about a year in Galilee. We cannot be quite sure of this, for when the accounts came to be written people's memories varied strangely. Some were quite sure they remembered his being in Jerusalem at the time of three different Passovers, and at one or two other feasts beside.*

If this were so he must have preached for two or three years, and have been more than a year in Jerusalem. But others could not recollect his being in Jerusalem at all until the very end of his life, and were sure that he did almost all his teaching during a single year in Galilee.† In three of the Gospels nothing is said about any feasts or any visit to Jerusalem except the last, but Jesus is spoken of as spending all his time going from village to village in Galilee. It seems to us now as if matters of such interest ought to have been better remembered; but as I have said, we never know how important any events are until after they have happened. I am not sure that any of you would do better if you should try in 1910 or 1920 to describe things which are happening now in 1879, although you would have letters and newspapers to help your memory, and in those days they had none.

* J. II. 13; V. 1; VI. 4; VII. 2, 10; X. 22; XII. 1.

† Matt. IV. 12, 23; XIX. 1; XX. 17, 18; XXI. 1–11.

Where the statements differ so much we have to choose between them; and as the first three Gospels were written earlier than the fourth, and as they all agree with each other about this, it seems more probable that their account is the correct one, especially as it does not seem likely, if Jesus taught in Jerusalem a whole year, that any one could have forgotten it.

We must suppose then that Jesus' entire ministry lasted about a year. When the time for the great feast of the Passover came, he determined to go with the other Jews, as his family had always done,* to Jerusalem. Probably he would have gone in any case; but it was very natural after he had once begun to preach that he should wish to preach in Jerusalem, where the great leaders of the church were, and where the people came together from all parts of Judæa. His disciples went with him, we are told, and several women beside. One writer says that his mother also was with him at this time, and did not leave him until his death.† So they lived together in Jerusalem for two or three weeks.

But Jesus found Jerusalem very different from Galilee. Instead of being followed by crowds wherever he went, listening eagerly to all he said, he found every one avoiding and opposing him. While he was on his way to Jerusalem, messengers had been sent by the leaders of the church hoping to catch him in some hasty word for which they could accuse or arrest him;‡ and this same party still pursued him.§ Some of his friends, or else the little children who had heard about him, shouted his name in the streets; and this displeased the priests very much, and gave them a chance to accuse him of making a disturbance, and trying to put himself in power.‖

Beside this, Jesus was offended at many of the religious practices which he saw in Jerusalem, and does not seem to have considered the city or the Temple such holy places as the other Jews thought them. At any rate he had more than ever to say about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Scribes,** and once, as we have seen, became so indignant with the traders who sold cattle and changed money inside the Temple that he drove a party of them out into the street.†† Instead of admiring the splendor of the Temple as others did, he felt only the

* L. II. 41.
† Matt. XXVII. 55, 56; J. XIX. 25.
‡ Matt. XIX. 3.
§ Matt. XXII. 15, 23, 41.
‖ Matt. XXI. 9, 15.
** Matt. XXIII.
†† Matt. XXI. 12.

corrupt way in which God was worshipped there, and the ruin that was sure to come on both the Temple and the worshippers, unless some great change were made.*

All this naturally offended the Jewish priests and rulers, and made them fear that the people would grow discontented by listening to such words, and lose faith in their religion. So they determined that Jesus must die. Jesus knew this very well, and understood of course before he came to Jerusalem what risks he would run if he came there; but he continued to teach and preach just as he had done in Galilee, thinking no doubt that if he were to suffer, the truth which he taught would be all the more likely to prevail.

REFERENCES.

Lives of Jesus; Hase's Life, pp. 191, 203; The Jesus of History, B. II. Ch. VII.; Bible for Young, V. Ch. XXII., XXVII., XXVIII.; Illustrated Renan, pp. 196, 205, 229, 248; Greg's Scenes from the Life of Jesus. Bach's "Passion Music."

*Matt. XXIV. 1, 2.

LESSON XXXII.

HIS DEATH.

1. What was the last meeting between Jesus and his disciples?

2. Tell what happened at the last supper.

3. What do you think is meant by L. XXII. 19.

4. Where was Gethsemane, and what happened there?

5. Tell what Judas did, and what you think of his character.

6. What charge did the Jews bring against Jesus?

7. Who was Pilate, and what part did he take?

8. What do you think of him?

9. Tell the circumstances of Jesus' death.

Texts: Matt. xxvi. 39, 41; Mark xv. 17; L. xxiii. 34; J. xiii. 14.

NOTES.

At last the danger which Jesus had feared ever since he reached Jerusalem really came. His enemies made arrangements to seize him when he was alone, and unfortunately one of his own disciples was ready to help them to do it. This was Judas Is-Kariot, who had the charge of their common purse. It may be that he was naturally fond of money, so that when the priests offered a bribe of thirty pieces of silver he could not resist it, even if he had to betray a master whom he loved; but possibly he thought, as the other disciples did, that if Jesus was really the Messiah, he could easily escape from his enemies if they attacked him. At any rate, he told them of a time and place where they might find Jesus by himself.

This was just at the beginning of the Passover; either at the feast itself,* or on the night before the feast, when Jesus and his disciples met together for their evening meal.† It was a very sad supper, for Jesus evidently felt that danger was near, and spoke and acted as if he should never meet his disciples again. There are two or three descriptions of this supper, coming perhaps from different disciples and so differing a good deal from each other, as is apt to happen when several

* Matt., Mark, Luke.

† J. XIII. 1.

persons describe the same event. Each one tells of some striking act of Jesus in those last hours which had fixed itself in his memory. One tells how Jesus went from one disciple to another, washing their feet as servants usually did to guests, and wiping them with a towel. In this way Jesus, on leaving his disciples, set them a beautiful example of humility and brotherly love.* A second writer, forgetting this incident, tells of another which the first did not mention. He remembered how Jesus passed the bread and wine to his disciples as they reclined at table, comparing the bread to his own body, and the wine to his blood, which were so soon to perish, and begging them to remember him whenever they did the same again. The words which he used ("this is my body," "this is my blood,") seem strange to us, but were very natural in the East where figures of speech are used so much, and the disciples long afterwards recalled them, and understood what he meant.† The washing of the feet was seldom repeated among the disciples, although Jesus enjoined it upon them quite as much as the other act;‡ but the passing of the bread and wine in memory of him became afterwards a regular practice among them, and in course of time was turned into a religious rite quite different from what Jesus had intended.

Later in the evening, after the supper was over, Jesus went out into a place on the mount of Olives called Gethsemane, where his sorrow overcame him, and he passed through a scene of great suffering, as he thought of the cruel death which he was so sure awaited him. The disciples, not thinking of danger, or believing that he had power to resist all violence, fell asleep quite undisturbed; but Jesus prayed in agony for God to save him, if it were possible, from the trial which was before him. It was the saddest and hardest moment of his life, and his struggle shows more plainly than anything else that Jesus' greatness was owing, not to his being above the trials which others feel, but to his being able to overcome all trials. The calm and beautiful way in which he met this suffering and his words of entire submission to God, "not my will but thine be done," have helped men ever since to meet their greatest sorrows.

Just at this time, a party of Jewish priests and Roman soldiers, led by Judas, came suddenly upon Jesus, and without meeting any resistance from him, seized him and carried him away. The disciples, astonished that the Messiah of the Jews could allow himself to be

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* J. XIII. 4–17.

† Matt. XXVI. 26–29; L. XXII. 19, 20.

‡ J. XIII. 14, 15.

made prisoner, and perhaps losing for the moment their confidence in him, forsook him at once and fled. Jesus was taken first to the High Priest's palace, where the great Council of the Jews, called the Sanhedrin, was assembled to try him. Formerly, this Council had power to put offenders to death, but under the Romans they could only bring forward charges while the Romans inflicted the punishment. The charge which they brought against Jesus was, that he had allowed himself to be called, or had called himself, the Messiah or King of the Jews. This they declared was blasphemy against God, and so was worthy of death by their law.* Then they took him before the Roman governor Pilate to be condemned. Pilate found nothing worthy of death in Jesus, and would gladly have spared him; but as the Jews declared that he not only had violated their laws but might also rebel against the Emperor,† and as the Romans never cared to interfere with the religion of conquered nations, Jesus was finally delivered into the hands of his countrymen to be put to death.

Had the Jews sentenced him he would have been stoned, but as the Roman death-punishment was crucifixion, Jesus was led away that very day, with two thieves, and the three were crucified side by side. No tortures could be more cruel or painful, but Jesus bore them without resistance or struggle, uttering only a single cry when the agony was greatest, which some understood as a cry of despair,‡ but which others thought was "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit."§ Still others thought he simply said "It is finished."‖ Among his last words were, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."**

His death was a noble ending of a holy and heroic life. Sad as his sufferings were, yet in no other way could he have shown so plainly what his true spirit was, or left the world so grand an example. What seemed at the time, even to his disciples, the utter failure of his purposes, proved in the end a great victory; for by destroying men's false ideas about the Messiah, it prepared the world to understand the

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* Matt. XXVI. 63–66; J. XIX. 7; Levit. XXIV. 16.
† L. XXIII. 2.
‡ Matt. XXVII. 46; Mark XV. 34.
§ L. XXIII. 46.
‖ J. XIX. 30.
** L. XXIII. 34.

better truth he had to teach. His short life proved the richest and most useful to the world, that had ever been spent on earth.

References.

Farrar's Life of Christ; Hase's Life of Jesus, pp. 203–229; Schenkel's "Character of Jesus," II. Sec. 7; Furness's "Jesus;" De Quincey's Theological Essays, I. p. 147; Longfellow's Divine Tragedy (3d Passover); Story's "Roman Lawyer in Jerusalem"; Psalms CXIII. to CXVIII. (Sung at Passover Supper); Illustrated Renan, pp. 240, 252, 256, 260, 264, 272, 276, 289, 293, 297.

LESSON XXXIII.

THE GATHERING OF THE DISCIPLES.

1. What became of the disciples after Jesus' death?
2. Why do you think they deserted him?
3. What hope of theirs was disappointed by his death?
4. What new idea did they form about him?
5. What did they mean when they spoke of his "coming"?
6. How did their idea of death and heaven differ from ours?
7. How did they live in Jerusalem?
8. What kind of worship did they have?
9. How did they differ from other Jews?

Texts: Matt. xvi. 28; L. xxiv. 32; J. xiv. 3, 18.

NOTES.

When Jesus was seized and crucified, his disciples, as we have seen, all deserted him. Peter, to be sure, followed him to the High Priest's house; but there his courage failed him, and when he was charged with being a follower of Jesus, he denied that he had ever seen him. In one of the Gospels, the beloved disciple is mentioned as being near the cross with the three Marys, when Jesus died.* but if this was so, he was the only disciple there. This does not seem very brave certainly; but we must remember that the Jews never supposed their Messiah could suffer violence. They even believed that when the Messiah really came he would live forever.† No doubt they had supposed that if the Roman soldiers attempted to seize Jesus, he would strike them all dead, and escape from their hands. When instead of this, he was carried before Pilate, and put to death on the cross like a criminal, they were terrified and bewildered, and were almost ready to believe that they had been deceived, and that Jesus was no Messiah at all.‡ For some time they gave up all their hopes, and went back to Galilee, in despair.§

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* John XIX. 26.

† J. XII. 34.

‡ L. XXIV. 21.

§ Matt. XXVIII. 16; Mark XVI. 7; J. XXI. 1; but compare L. XXIV. 49.

Very soon, however, perhaps within a year, they began to feel that even though Jesus had gone he had accomplished a great work, and had left much for them to do. His truth had not perished if he had, and they were bound to teach it to the world in honor of his memory. Besides they remembered his saying something to them, which they could not understand at the time, about coming to them before they died to establish his kingdom.* Perhaps he was not really dead then, after all; or even if he had died, might he not perhaps come back to them, and begin his reign? Certainly, as they thought, if he was the real Messiah he must come.

If their idea of death had been like ours, they could not have had such a serious expectation as this. But it was very different from ours. They thought that those who died remained under ground until the great day of judgment, when all were to rise, body and soul together, and pass up to heaven, where the good would live with God forever.† They thought of heaven as a particular place, like another earth, beyond the clouds, and even supposed that some of their ancestors, like Enoch and Elijah, had been carried away to this upper world, without dying, and might perhaps return. Elijah was expected to return to earth at any time.‡

So it happened that the idea began soon to spread among the disciples that Jesus had not really died, but had been snatched up into heaven like Elijah, and would by and by come back to the earth, as he had promised, and found the Messiah's kingdom. Some thought they had actually seen him walking about on earth, after his crucifixion. Others said they had been to the grave two days after his body was laid there, and found it empty.§ So all kinds of reports arose, and the disciples, who at first had been so hopeless, took heart again, and began to look for their Master's return. For many years they clung to this expectation, and talked constantly of his coming as something that was sure to happen during their lifetime.‖

In this hope, the disciples came back to Jerusalem as the place where Jesus was most likely to appear, or at any rate where they could best preach about him; and there as the numbers grew they lived together as a great family, owning everything in common, dividing their property with each other, and going about from house

* Matt. XVI. 28; XXIV. 34.

† 1 Thess. IV. 13–17; see Alger's Doctrine of a Future Life, Part II, Ch. 8, 9.

‡ Malachi IV. 5; Matt. XI. 14; J. I. 21.

§ L. XXIV. 3, 12; J. XX. 2–7.

‖ 1 Cor. I. 7; XV. 23; 1 Thes. II. 19; IV. 15; Jas. V. 7.

to house to eat and drink.* They made no attempt at first to form a new church. They were all Jews, and as Jesus had always attended the synagogues and the Temple, and had left them no directions about church or worship, they went on as he had done, worshipping at the Temple, observing the Jewish feasts, reading the Jewish scriptures, and following all the Jewish customs as to sacrifices, meats and all other forms. If Jesus was really to return, and destroy all kingdoms and rulers and churches, as the Messiah was expected to do, there was of course no reason for beginning any new order of things until he came. So the followers of Jesus went on for several years, living and worshipping like other Jews, attracting little attention from those about them, but looking eagerly every year and every day for the Messiah's return.

References.

Hausrath's "New Testament Times"; Nicolas' "Doctrines religieuses des Juifs;" Renan's "Apostles," Ch. I.-V.; Fragments of Christian History (J. H. Allen); Arnold's "Literature and Dogma," Ch. VII.; Alger's "Doctrine of a Future Life;" Bible for Young chapter on "The Resurrection of Jesus." Illustrated Renan, p. 264.

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* Acts II, 41-46.

LESSON XXXIV.

BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. Why did the disciples leave Jerusalem again?
2. To what other places did they go?
3. When and where were they first called Christians?
4. Why had they not been called so earlier?
5. Who was Paul?
6. Tell something about his journeyings and the countries which he visited.
7. What were the first letters which he wrote?
8. What led him to write them?
9. What opponents had he?
10. Were there any Christian writings before?
11. During what years were most of Paul's letters written?

Texts: Acts xvii. 23; 1 Cor. ii. 9; xiii. 1, 13; Gal. v. 1, 9.

NOTES.

For some time the work of the disciples went on very quietly in Jerusalem; but by and by their constant preaching about Jesus excited attention and brought them into trouble Some of them were seized and beaten, others were thrown into prison, others still were driven out of Jerusalem, and so began to teach and preach elsewhere. In this way the teachings of Jesus were spread through all parts of Samaria and Galilee, and even into the foreign countries round about Judæa, especially the cities of the Mediterranean, where the Jews were accustomed to trade with Greek merchants. One of these places was Antioch of Syria, at that time the chief city of the East, and third largest city (next to Rome and Alexandria) in the world. Here many converts were made, both among the Jews and among the Greeks. Here too the followers of Jesus first received a name, and became a distinct church. Until then they had not separated themselves from the Jews, and so needed no new name, though they were sometimes nicknamed Nazarenes.* But in Antioch they formed a party by

* Acts XXIV. 5.

themselves, and the people, hearing them talk so much about Christ, and supposing this was their leader's name, began to call them "Christians," a name which clung to them always afterwards.* In this way a new church was at last formed, and Jews and Christians became more and more unlike each other.

Among the new converts was a Jew named Saul, who had been before one of their bitterest enemies, but who became now more zealous than any of the earliest disciples to spread the teachings of Jesus into new countries. Joining the Christians at Antioch he started off immediately for Asia Minor, and afterwards made journeys into Europe, visiting Macedonia and Greece, and forming little churches wherever he went. After becoming a Christian he changed his name from Saul to Paul, and as he brought many more Greeks than Jews into his churches, he was called the Apostle to the Gentiles or Heathen.

All this time there had been no Bible nor any writings of any kind. As Jesus had written nothing himself, and had never told his disciples to do so, they had no Scriptures except the rolls of the Prophets and the Law which were read in the Jewish synagogues. All that the people knew about Jesus or his words was what the disciples told them when they preached. Even after churches were formed there were no Christian Scriptures read in them until more than a hundred years after Jesus died.

But Paul, who had studied with the most learned Jewish teachers and was more of a scholar than the other disciples, fell into the way of writing letters to the places which he had visited, to give them advice, or send them friendly messages, or reprove them for their faults. These letters were sent back and forth among the churches,† and after his death what remained of them were collected and called Paul's Epistles. They are mere letters, to be sure, but are none the less interesting for that, and are quite as valuable to us as if they were books of history. You will find them near the end of the New Testament, but they are really the oldest Christian writings to be found, and were the beginning of the Christian Bible.

The first of these letters were probably two which he wrote to the church at Thessalonica from Corinth, an old and wealthy city of Greece, where he spent a year or two during his first visit to Europe.‡ Just before coming to Corinth he had visited Thessalonica in Macedonia where he had preached for three Sabbaths in a Jewish Syna-

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* Acts XI. 26.

† Col. IV. 16.

‡ Acts XVIII. 1, 11, 18.

gogue, and drawn together a little circle of Jews and Greeks.* He had been finally driven from the city by the Jews, and had gone directly from there to Corinth, where he wrote two letters to the young church, urging them all to be faithful under their persecutions, and explaining some things which he could not tell them when he was there. These are called the "Epistles to the Thessalonians," and were written about A. D. 53, twenty years after Jesus died.

Not long after this, perhaps in the year 55 or 56, Paul had occasion to send a letter to the churches which he had founded in Galatia, a province of Asia Minor. This was called the Epistle to the Galatians, and was written under somewhat peculiar circumstances. Paul had been a very rigid Jew, but on becoming a Christian had given up most of the Jewish rites and taught his followers not to regard the old feasts, allowing them to observe the Sabbath or not as they chose. The older disciples, however, such as Peter and John, opposed him strongly, and insisted that it was just as important for Christians to be circumcised, and observe the Sabbath and Passover, as for the Jews. They did not like to see any changes made in the ancient Jewish customs. They even sent messengers to the Galatian churches, after Paul had left, warning the people against him, and saying that as he had never seen or followed Jesus during his lifetime, he was not a real apostle. Paul looked upon this as a great interference with his work, as it really was, and wrote a very stirring letter to the Galatians, declaring that he had quite as much right to be called an apostle as any of the others, begging the Galatians not to go back to Jewish forms and customs, and accusing his opponents of trying to turn his own church against him.†

About the same time, still greater trouble arose in his church at Corinth. Corinth was a rich and corrupt city, and the young Christian church had not wholly escaped its temptations. Evil habits had crept in and some of their sacred gatherings, held in memory of Jesus himself, had been turned into drunken feasts.‡ Besides this, the Corinthians, like other Greeks, being fond of discussing and reasoning had taken the liberty to criticize Paul's teachings, and had called some of his most important doctrines in question. § His enemies who had troubled him in Galatia had followed him to Corinth also, and were bringing confusion and division into the Christian ranks. Four differ-

* Acts XVII. 1–9.
† Gal. I. 1; V. 1, 2.
‡ 1 Cor. XI. 20, 21.
§ 1 Cor. XV. 12, 35.

ent parties arose, one calling itself after Paul, another after Peter, another after a certain Apollos, another still after Christ himself.* Paul feared that these divisions would break up his little church entirely, and wrote them two long letters, begging them to forget their differences and follow neither him nor any other disciple but only Jesus. These were called the Epistles to the Corinthians, and were written about A. D. 57 or 58.

Beside all these, Paul also wrote letters to the churches in Rome, in Ephesus, in Philippi and in Colosse, all which places you can find on the map. No doubt others still were written and lost,† but fortunately these were saved. Some letters not really written by Paul were afterwards called his‡ to tempt people to read them, or else because he had written so many that all which had no name were supposed to be his.

Paul was finally taken prisoner in Jerusalem and carried to Rome to be tried. After this, nothing is known about him; but in these few years he had done more than any one else to teach the world about Jesus and his truth. These little gatherings, collected by different disciples at Jerusalem, Antioch, Asia Minor and Greece, were the beginnings of the Christian Church.

References.

Howson's "Apostle Paul;" Baur's "Paul; "Renan's "Apostles" and "St. Paul;" Zeller's Commentary on the Acts; Chadwick's Bible of To-Day; Teachers' Notes, Oct. 1877; Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul; Fragments of Christian History.

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* 1 Cor. I. 12.

† Col. IV. 16.

‡ Those to Timothy, Titus, Philemon and The Hebrews.

LESSON XXXV.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. What were the first Christian writings?
2. Who else wrote Epistles beside Paul?
3. Mention the three earliest Gospels.
4. Tell something of the way in which they were written.
5. When was the Book of Acts written?
6. Tell something about the fourth Gospel and how it differs from the other three.
7. By what time were all the New Testament books written?
8. By what time were they collected together?
9. What was meant by "Scriptures" in the first and second centuries?
10. How was it determined what books should belong to the New Testament?
11. In what sense is the New Testament sacred?

Texts: Jas. i. 27; ii. 26; iii. 5, 11; 2 P. iii. 4; 1 J. iv. 8.

NOTES.

Paul's letters to his different churches were, as we have seen, the first Christian writings, and were written for the most part between the years 50 and 60. This is a very good date for you all to remember. But other letters beside Paul's were written of course, and some of them have been saved.

One of these is called the Epistle of James; James being perhaps the brother of Jesus, though there were so many Jameses that we cannot be quite sure which this is. The letter is quite different from any of Paul's, as it has much more to say about conduct and duty than about religious belief. The writer thought "works," as he calls good deeds, more important than "faith," and has some very fine

passages about the use of the tongue and the treatment of the poor. Altogether it is the most practical epistle in the New Testament.

Then there are two whose author was not known with certainty. Some thought Peter wrote them, others were sure he did not, but that one at least was written after his death. In the end, however, his name was given them, and they are always called the 1st and 2d Epistles of Peter. Whether they are really his or not, they give us very interesting pictures of the early Christian faith.

Still another long letter, almost as early as Paul's, was written to show what was to be done with the old Scriptures or the Temple service, now that the Christians no longer called themselves Jews. Some thought that the whole Jewish religion, Scriptures and all, should be given up, others that as much as possible should be still kept. The Epistle to the Hebrews settles the question by saying that the Old Testament was never meant to be literally understood, but was an allegory throughout; that the forms and sacrifices were all symbols to prepare the way for Jesus, and that he was the true high-priest, though in a spiritual sense. Now that Christ had really come, as this writer thought, the old faith was quite useless, and ought to pass away.* Who wrote the letter we cannot tell; though it was long thought to have been by Paul himself.

After this whole generation had died, some people began to doubt again whether Jesus was really the Christ, or even whether such a person had lived at all. To answer these questions two or three short letters were written, called afterwards, for some reason, the three Epistles of John. In reality they were not written till after his death, and hardly any one at first believed that they were his;† but when the New Testament books were finally collected, the name of John was given to these.

The only other writing which belongs to the earliest times was a very singular sort of propheey, to prove that Jesus was certainly coming back to the world at once, and to predict what would happen when he came; how Rome would fall and Christ reign in Jerusalem a thousand years; how the dead would then rise and the whole world be judged; how the earth and the sea would pass away, and there would be "new heavens and a new earth." None of these things really happened, as we now know; but it is interesting to see what people's expectations were in those days, and how long the early

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* Heb. VIII. 13.

† The 2d and 3d were rejected by Irenæus and Tertullian, A D. 200, and by Origen, A. D. 254.

Christians held to the belief that Jesus would come back to them. The book is called the "Revelation of St. John," and was written about A. D. 69.

As time passed on, and Jesus did not return, and all his companions grew old and died, the churches began to collect all the accounts they could find of his life and words. It was thirty years or more after his death before they began to think of this, and much, of course, had been forgotten; but so many things had been told over and over again, that almost every church had its traditions about Jesus, not always agreeing with each other, but quite too precious to be lost. These were soon collected and made into complete narratives. Probably the same thing was going on at the same time in different places; for before many years, a number of such accounts of the life of Jesus appeared.*

What became of most of these we cannot tell, but towards the end of the first century three remained, called the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, which seemed so complete, and so nearly alike, that they came into common use, and have lasted until now. Perhaps these Gospels sprang up in different cities, Matthew in Jerusalem possibly, Mark in Antioch, Luke in Rome. Or perhaps Mark, which is much the shortest, was written before the others, and was filled out by Matthew who wished to add some of Jesus' conversations and discourses, and finally copied again by Luke, with other changes, for the special use of the Greek-Christians to whom he belonged. But these are only guesses, as every thing must be about books of whose origin we know so little. Probably they were all different when first written, from what they are now, and were a good many years in growing to their present size. Their names were given them many years after they were first used.

At the same time that these Gospels were compiled or somewhat later, all the records of the years following Jesus' death were collected, especially all that was known of Peter and Paul. This book was called the "Acts of the Apostles," and was written probably about A. D. 125. It is very interesting indeed, though the accounts of Paul differ somewhat from what he says of himself, as though the writer had not read all of Paul's epistles.

Perhaps you have wondered why I speak of only three Gospels, when in your New Testament you find four. This is because the fourth Gospel is of a different kind from the others and was written much later. Soon after Jesus' death, as we have seen, people began to question whether he was really the Messiah, and whether so wonderful a

* L. I. 1, 2.

being as he then seemed was actually a man like other men. Some held strange philosophical notions about him, thinking that he was not a man at all, but a divine being who had always existed in heaven as a spirit, and had been sent to the earth by God, to take the form of Jesus, and then return to heaven again. One of these philosophers wrote the fourth Gospel. He calls Jesus the "Word of God," a term which was much used in those days, but sounds strangely now; and he shows, in very poetical and beautiful language, how wonderful a being Jesus was. It is a much more difficult Gospel to understand than either of the others, but it shows what deep thought was given in those days to religious subjects, and what different ideas there were of God and heaven from ours. Like so many other books of the New Testament, this was long thought to have been written by the apostle John, who lived to be very old, and wrote this, it was said, just before his death. Many believe now that it was written much later than that, and in any case could hardly be the work of just such a man as John appears to be in the three other Gospels.* But this is a question on which there are many different opinions; and fortunately the book is just as beautiful and valuable, whether one person wrote it or another.

By about A. D. 150, all the books of the New Testament were probably written. For many years they were used separately, some in one church some in another; and it was a long time before any one knew or accepted them all. A list of these books was made out about the year 140, in which only one Gospel is mentioned, and only ten Epistles of Paul.† No such list for two hundred years agrees with what we call the New Testament books, and hardly any body in those times mentioned Peter's epistles, or James's or two of John's, with the rest. No one spoke of the "New Testament" then, but only of "The Gospel" and "The Apostle," as in old times they had spoken of the Law and the Prophets. For more than a hundred years, none of these writings were read in the churches, because they were not considered sacred, like the Jewish Scriptures, but were only for common use. If you had spoken to any Christian at that time about the "Scriptures," he would have understood you to mean the Old Testament only. It was not till nearly A. D. 400, that the churches determined which books really belonged to the New Testament, and which did not;‡ and even after that there was much difference of opinion.

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* Mark III. 17; X. 35–37; L. IX. 54.

† Marcion's.

‡ Council of Carthage, A.D. 397.

So the New Testament was almost four hundred years in growing into its present form. The different books were chosen out of a great many at different times, and by different persons; and there was nothing of course to prevent mistakes of judgment or opinion. But the writings which were selected are certainly very precious, and we may well be content with them. The Gospels and Epistles did not depend on any action of churches or councils to make them holy. They are holy of themselves, as containing so many sacred truths, and as giving an account of the holiest events in man's history.

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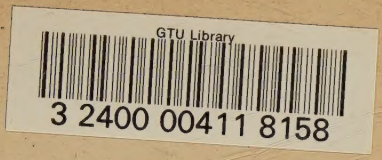

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